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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



["YOU CAN AND SHALL," SAID HUGH, WITH DECISION. "HERE AT LAST IS AN OPENING FOR YOU, MY POOR MADDIE."]

MADELINE GRANT.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning, leaving Madeline at the station, or, if she pleased to follow very slowly, Mr. Glynn called at Pencaster-house to have a "little explanation."

The maid's face looked portentously grave as she opened the door, and oh! ominous object, two good-sized trunks stood corded in the hall. As he glanced at them in passing, somebody came out of a door just behind him, and said in a biting voice,—

"Dear me, I am surprised to see Mr. Glynn under the circumstances, but as he is here perhaps he can give me an address for Miss Grant's boxes."

"May I ask what you mean, Miss Selina?" he said, confronting her the instant the drawing-room door had closed, and looking at her very sternly.

"I mean," she replied, flushing to a dull brick colour, "that after her escapade of last

evening Miss Madeline Grant never enters these doors again—a young lady who stayed out all night!" concluding with a wild, dramatic gesture.

"That was not her fault, Miss Selina. We waited, as you told us, at the bottom of the steps, and so missed the train. I could not get a cab—I did my utmost. I left Miss Grant at the King's Arms, and brought her from there this morning. She—"

"Oh!" interrupted Miss Selina, throwing up both hands, "pray spare me the details. It is nothing to me who she was with, or where she went. We have done with her. It was a planned thing between you, no doubt."

"Miss Selina!" cried Mr. Glynn, becoming crimson, "your sex protects you. A man dared not say what you have permitted yourself to utter. Am I to understand that because, through waiting for you, by your express directions, Miss Grant lost her only train home last night, and was obliged to remain in Riverford, you would blast her reputation and thrust her out of your doors? Am I to understand this?"

"You are," she returned, defiantly, looking

him full in the face with her cold, subtle, cruel grey eyes.

"And what is to become of the young lady?" he asked, with a forced calmness that was ominous enough.

"Nay," shrugging her shoulders, "that is a matter between her and you," she replied, with an evil smile. "She need not refer to us for a character."

"Perhaps your mother will be more lenient," he said, after a pause. "Remember, Miss Grant has no home and no friends. Bear that in mind."

"I am speaking for my mother," she replied sharply. "She refuses to see the girl or allow her inside our door. We are not rich, but, at any rate, we have always been respectable," choking with excitement.

"I'm sure I am delighted to hear it," he replied, making a low ironical bow, "and as there is nothing further to be said I will wish you good morning."

"Good morning," returned Miss Selina, ringing the bell and curtseying simultaneously. "You will be pleased to remove Miss Grant's boxes," thereby firing the last

shot; and, oh! sweet privilege, having the last word.

And Mr. Glyn walked out of the house in a very bewildered and confused state of mind, boiling with indignation, cool as he looked. He had not proceeded far when he met Madeline coming towards him with expectant, terrified face.

Now was the moment for action. His senses were strung to alertness, his mind cleared of misgivings. She was thrust out homeless, friendless, alone in the wide world. She should share his name, such as it was—it was better than none. She should, as she would, be his wife. She should be rich in love, if nothing else.

Prudence had hitherto sealed his lips, for her sake chiefly. Now that she had no resources, no place open to receive her he could, and would, speak.

Mrs. Wolferton was abroad. What a friend she would have been at this crisis to one who was absolutely friendless!

The first thing he did was to hail a cab, to send the man straight back to Rochester-house for Miss Grant's luggage, and desire him to bring it to the station.

"Why, what—what does it mean? Are they so very angry?" she asked, with blanched cheeks. "Do you mean that they are sending me away?" she added, tremulously.

"Come down here with me, Madeline," he replied, leading her into the public gardens they were just passing, "and I will tell you all about it. They are very angry, as you say. They won't have you back again, and have packed your boxes ready for removal. Sharp work, I must say. However, when our door is shut another opens. There is another home ready for you, Madeline. Can you guess whose it is?"

Madeline looked at Mr. Glyn, and stood perfectly quiet, very pale, with lips tightly pressed together, and made no reply.

"Madeline, you know that it is my home," he continued, eagerly. "Of course you know that I love you. So well do I love you that until now I have dared to speak of it. I am poor—it will be a life of struggling poverty. Can you share it? Will you venture?"

His companion stopped back a pace, and sat down upon a wooden bench, still silent.

"Madeline, will you not answer me?" he urged, looking down upon the trembling girl. "You—do not mean—?" she faltered. "I know you are very kind, but I cannot accept your pity, for that is what it is."

"I solemnly declare to you that it is not," he returned, with a gesture of impetuous protest, "and if it were, have you not heard that 'pity is akin to love'?"

"It is impossible," she said, slowly. "You are speaking on the impulse of the moment. This time yesterday, tell me honestly—raising her eyes to his—"had you any intention of—of this?"

"To be quite truthful, then, Madeline, I had not."

"There, you see," she interrupted, hastily, "that is enough. That is your answer," holding out her hand, with a sudden, impulsive gesture.

"No, hear me out. It was on your account I held my tongue. If I had had a decent income I would have spoken long ago, but I felt that I had no right to remove you even from Mrs. Penn's care without having a comfortable home to offer you. I meant and hoped to work very hard, and to come back next year. Now all has been changed. Circumstances alter cases. I ask you now, Madeline, will you be afraid to begin at the bottom of the ladder with me? Something tells me that some day I shall reach the top."

"I shall only be a dead weight and a burden," she replied, in a broken voice.

She was relenting. Her own heart was a strong advocate in Mr. Glyn's favour.

"What will your relations say when they

hear that you want to marry a penniless girl?" she murmured, indistinctly.

"They will say nothing that will signify one straw. I am independent; I have no claims on them, and they have no right to dictate to me. By the time they hear of the news we shall, I hope, be married. We have nothing to wait for, and the sooner you have a home of your own the better. If I had sisters, or any near relations, who could take you in it would be different, but I am nearly as much alone in the world as you are."

In the end Mr. Glyn's eloquence prevailed, and Madeline Grant walked out of the bare, brown, wintry-looking gardens his affianced wife.

Rash young woman! Rash young man! One would have thought that they had the fortune of Croesus, the full consent and the warmest wishes of tribes of wealthy relatives, to look at their faces as they passed out of the gates side by side.

Madeline had now thrown all her misgivings to the winds, and with the impetuous ardour of her eighteen summers was prepared to make the most of this heaven-sent period, and to see everything *couleur de rose*, to banish the inmates of Pentonville from her mind for ever, and to make a new departure in a new and happy life, believing that, although a poor man's wife, her path would be strewn with roses, and being just as much expert of household cares and the value of pence, shillings, and guineas as one of the children of the third countess of Rochester-house. Miserably mistaken Madeline!

As for Mr. Glyn, Madeline was his. Madeline was an angel, young, unspoiled, unsophisticated, with modest values and a firm belief in him. Their future was before them. It was.

In a very short time Madeline Grant was Madeline Glyn. They were married at a little old church in the City, with no other witnesses than the vicar and the clerk, and set up housekeeping in modest lodgings not far from the Temple, and from which by leaning well out of the drawing-room window and watching your wife you could obtain a glimpse of the Thames embankment.

The good old days, when the girls and boys lived in chambers and entertained "half-a-dozen of the dear girls," were no more.

Mr. Glyn was obliged to step up his little tent outside the venerable residence, in the second-floor front of 2, Ballinacree place.

To Madeline it was a palace, because it was her very own home. Here she might take the law, alter the arrangement of the furniture, give orders, order in tea, at any hour of the day, and come in as she pleased. She could scarcely realise such liberty. Neither could she realise her wedding-ring, and she frequently stared for a moment in doubt when she heard herself called "Mrs. Glyn."

Hugh was not so poor as she imagined, for he hired a piano, he bought her new songs, and, oh, joy! two such pretty dresses—flowers, books, magazines; he took her to the theatres, the pantomimes, for walks in the parks (when he had time); he showed her some of the sights of London—St. Paul's, the National Gallery, the Tower.

Madeline was perfectly happy; there was not one single drawback, not one little cloud in her sky yet. He was perfectly satisfied too. It was delightful to come home in those dark wet winter nights and find a wife, a cosy room, a blazing fire, and his pretty Madeline awaiting him.

"Who would be a bachelor?" he asked himself contemptuously, as he watched her fitting to and fro after dinner, pulling up his armchair, and filling his pipe. If he had one little *carrière* period it was this—that she would not always give him mutton chops, and a wish that her ideas of a *menu* were a little more expansive.

Nevertheless, he was very happy. He had an incentive to work hard now, and he did work. He was getting known in a small way—he was actually getting on; his debt was on

one rung of the professional ladder, at any rate.

But this fool's paradise was not to last—it never does. The agent that opened the gate, and drove them out into the everyday, work-a-day, hard, stony world was "typhoid fever." The hot summer succeeding their marriage was a trying one. Typhoid fever seized on many victims, among others on the hard-working young barrister; seized on him with a death-like grip, flung him on a sick bed, and kept him there for months.

It brought so many other ills in its train it was hard to shake off. Finances were getting very low, as they are sure to do when the bread-winner is idle; doctors' bills, chemists' bills were mounting up, as well as the butchers' and bakers', not to speak of the landlady's little account.

All the burden now lay upon one pair of young shoulders—Madeline's; and to quote a homely but suggestive phrase, she absolutely "did not know where to turn." She had neither money nor friends; her husband had no money, and as to his friends, since they had heard of what they were good enough to call "his low marriage with a girl beneath him, and without a halfpenny," they washed their hands of him one and all with the same unanimity.

Poor Madeline was in terrible straits, but she was brave and energetic, and did not sit down with her hands before her and cry. An acquaintance of her husband's, another young barrister, came to see her and him, and gave help in the shape of advice, which, for once, was valuable.

They moved to the top story—the attic; that was one step of which their landlady approved, and he procured some law copyist for Madeline, who wrote a neat hand, which brought in a few shillings, and kept the actual wolf from the door. He sent her grapes, and other little friendly delicacies to the invalid, and was, indeed, that rare article—a "friend in need"—and a real Samaritan.

He considered that Glyn had behaved like a good man in struggling on nothing; but especially the girl was an immense temptation to idleness, so young, so unsophisticated, and yet a girl who possessed both brain, sense, and a brave heart.

There was an instance far more in which, when poverty had come into the door, love had driven out all the evil. "Strange, but true! Their reverses had only served to draw the Glyn couple closer together. They were a remarkable study to Mr. Jewson, who was a cynic and philosopher in a small way, and who smiled, and smiled, and marvelled."

Things had never come to the worst with these unfortunate people yet, not until a third was added to the establishment in the shape of a Master Glyn, who poked up his wrinkled red face, thrust his greasy fists into his eyes, and made hideous grimaces at the world in which he found himself, and in which, to tell the truth, he was not particularly wanted, except by his mother, to whom he was both welcome and, in her partial eyes, exquisitely beautiful.

His father, who was slowly recovering—an emaciated spectre of what he had been—was dubious with regard to the striking resemblance to himself, and frequently asked himself what in the world was to be done with this son and heir. "How was he to be fed, and clothed, and educated?" Echo answered—How? For the Glyn were now very, very poor.

I mean by this that Mr. Glyn's watch had long been ticketed in a pawnbroker's window, that Madeline's one little brooch had gone the same way, also—oh, breathe if not!—her best dress and bonnet, also Mr. Glyn's top-coat and evening dress clothes; that the invalid only tasted meat, and that in scanty portions, Madeline telling many clever fibs with regard to her own dinner.

The one person who was well-to-do was the baby. He was clothed in a beautiful flannel and hood and robe, Mr. Jewson's presents, purchased by that keen-eyed, close-stated

gentleman with many blushes, and presented with some pride to his godson. More than once Madeline's mental eye had seen these gorgeous garments arranged away to the pawnbrokers round the corner; but she fought with the idea, and sternly kept it at bay as yet.

Their circumstances were, indeed, all but desperate, when one evening Mr. Jessop came thundering up the stairs, newspaper in hand, and panted out, as he threw off his hat and sat down on the nearest chair,—

"I say, Mrs. Glyn, what was your name before you were married?"

"My name!" she echoed, looking blankly at him, pen in hand, for she was trying to keep the baby quiet and do some copying at the same time, "was Grant—Madeline Grant," not a little startled at the abrupt question.

"Ah! I thought so!" he cried, triumphantly, clearing his throat, and unfolding the paper with a flourish. "Then just listen to this:—"

"Madeline Grant—If this should meet the eye of Madeline Grant, who is earnestly requested to communicate with Mrs. P., of P—House, at once, where she will hear of something greatly to her advantage."

"Now, what do you think of that?" he demanded, looking at his friend Glyn, who, drawn up near a handful of cinders, had been poring over a law book. "Looks like a legacy, doesn't it?"

"Too good to be true, I'm afraid. Eh! Madeline! However, there is no harm in answering the notice, it may mean something. You had better write by to-night's post."

And Madeline accordingly wrote to Mrs. Penn of Rochester House, on that very evening, although even the outlay of a penny stamp was a serious consideration.

"Dear Mrs. Penn, I have seen your notice in the paper. My address is—

2, Solferino-terrace, Westminster.

—Yours truly, "M. G."

Madeline was so accustomed to sign her initials, and was now so flurried between anticipation, excitement, anxiety, and the screams of the baby that she never had the presence of mind to write her full name, and on this slight omission, this one little cog, turned a very important factor in her future career.

CHAPTER VI.

The very morning after Madeline had despatched her letter, a telegram was handed in to Miss Grant, 2, Solferino-terrace. The landlady herself mounted panting to the attic, orange, as before in hand.

"I was just for sending it away, mam," to Madeline she gasped, surveying her with an inquiring eye, "but it came into my head as I'd show it to you, on chance."

"Thank you, it is for me," returned the other, hastily tearing it open and scanning her eyes over it, with suddenly heightened colour.

"Come here at once, to-day if possible—news of your father.—From Mrs. Penn," was the message she read, with the greatest astonishment—astonishment and agitation reflected in her face.

"But it's for Miss Grant, and you've opened it!" exclaimed the landlady, suspiciously. "How is that, ah? I never would have supposed—no, never—squaring herself, and becoming extremely red, "as you wasn't on the square, and as I've always kept a respectable house I couldn't think—"

"You need not alarm yourself, Mrs. Kane, and you need not think about the matter, it's all quite right. I am Mrs. Glyn; but I was Miss Grant before I became Mrs. Glyn, and the sender of the message does not know that I am married," interrupted Madeline, speaking with studied composure, but her heart all the time beating very fast.

Instant as was Mrs. Kane she must not quarrel with her; her roof covered them on sufferance only. Were she to thrust them forth where could they go?

They were quite at her mercy, for they owed her money, and latterly she had been inclined to take out a good deal of interest in rude insolence, and biting vulgar gibes, and unpleasant hints with regard to paupers coming and settling on honest, poor, hard-working people—paupers as could afford dress, and flowers, and theatres, and pianos once, but saved nothing for a rainy day.

Paupers—impetuous people like the Glynes—especially Mrs. Glyn, who bore the brunt of these encounters, could not afford to stand on their dignity and be independent and "move on."

They must humbly submit; but it was very galling, nearly as galling to Madeline as Miss Selina's yoke, that had pressed on her so heavily, little more than a year ago.

Who but herself knew with what depressing eyes and voice she had pleaded with the irate landlady for a little time—how humbly she ventured to ask for coals—how stealthily she stole up and down stairs, carrying baby, doing her own miserable errands, making her presence as unobtrusive as possible, for fear of offending her hostess's irritable eyes.

Her hostess's irritable eyes were fixed upon her now with a look that was all but insulting as she listened to her explanation, and with a—

"Oh, well I suppose, as I know no better, I must believe you!" and with a violent snuff, that intimated the very reverse, Mrs. Beattie glared once round their miserable sitting-room—as if to see if anything were broken or missing, or the valuable property damaged in any way—and failing to find the smallest pretext for complaint went out of the room with an aggressive strut, banging the door loudly after her.

Madeline lost no time in rushing to the invalid with her great news, and placing the piece of pink paper in his hand,—

"Here's something at last! I feel that some change is coming, that these dreadful days cannot—cannot go on for ever! I believe papa is alive—is coming home!" she exclaimed. "What do you think, Hugh?" she asked, breathlessly.

Hugh, still holding the telegram in his thin, transparent-looking hand, gazed at his wife for some seconds in silence.

How changed she was, he thought to himself, with a sharp pang of self-reproach. She was shabby, very genteelly shabby.

Her poor black dress, all mended and pieced, her face was thin, her eyes sunken, their look eager, anxious, and almost desperate.

An ordinary intelligent person would have declared that she looked half-starved, and so she was; but how furiously she would have disclaimed such a verdict!

She would rather have died than admitted its truth. As long as Hugh had meat once a day—as long as baby had milk—she did very well on anything, and anything may mean almost nothing—it is an elastic word. Hugh was telling himself that he had been a culpable wretch to marry Madeline Grant.

What could he say to her father when he once more placed his daughter in his arms—a daughter in all but rage, with a face pinched with hunger, without a friend, without a penny, and weighted with a dying husband and a peculiarly ill-tempered baby?

How much better it would have been if he had curbed his foolish fancy, nipped it at once in the bud, and left Madeline to her fate. Any fate would be better than that to which he, miserable man, had so speedily and powerlessly reduced her.

What would her father say? Would he cast her off? Madeline had hinted that her papa, as well as she could judge from his letters, was fond of money, show, style, and great people.

He hoped that she would always make acquaintances with girls who were fully her equals, and not lower herself by school friendships that might be impossible to keep up in after-life.

She had once innocently repeated this to

him verbatim, and now it all came vividly before his mind.

Madeline had done worse than form a friendship of which her aspiring parent would disapprove—a friendship that could have been slipped out of like an old glove. Here she was, tied for life to a poor man, whose only occupation seemed likely to be that of invalid—a stone round her neck as long as he lived.

He had but faint hopes of his own recovery. Everything was against his getting better. He knew it could not be helped, and he was very patient.

If he had good wine, wholesome delicacies to tempt his appetite, pure air, change, he might have a chance, and he knew he might just as well cry for the moon.

"What is to be done, Hugh?" asked Madeline, rather surprised at his long silence. "What do you think of it?"

"You must go, of course," he returned, at last—"to-day."

"Go to-day? My dear Hugh, what are you thinking of?" sitting down in a rush chair as she spoke, and looking at him with wide-eyed amazement. "Where is the money to come from?" nodding her head as if she had advanced an unanswerable question. "Look! Here," producing a shabby little purse with a brass clasp, and turning out the pitifully small contents, "is all I have—two-and-sev'rance!"

"Still you must go, Maddy, by hook or by crook. Much may depend on it. A return third-class—"

"A return third-class would be twice eighteen-and-sixpence—one pound seventeen," she interrupted. "And besides that, I could not go in this," looking round at her old gown. "Now—appealingly—"could I?"

"No, you could not," he returned, with a little flash in his pale face. "And you must get something out. To get something out something else must go in, and—with an effort—"I never thought to part with it, but—but it must go, and it will go in a good cause. I mean," wiping his damp forehead as he spoke, "my mother's miniature. It is set in seed pearls—the back is gold—it ought to bring in a couple of pounds. It's in my desk, Maddy, in a little carved morocco case. Take it, my dear, and welcome!"

"Oh, Hugh!" coming over and kneeling beside him. "I don't like to. Must I really? I know you think so much of it. It's the only relic you possess. No, I really can't."

"Yes, you can, and shall," said the sick man with decision. "Here, at last, is an opening for you, my poor Maddy. Something tells me your father is alive—is coming home rich. You are his only child, his heiress. You will be looked after and provided for, and have a home when I am gone. Yes, my dear Maddy, it will be best for you in the end. It was wicked of me to marry you. I see it all so plainly now, having nothing set by for such a strait as this, and no friends; but I never, never dreamt it would come to this, Maddy. Believe me, I never did. Forgive me! I should have taken you to Mrs. Wolferton's house and telegraphed to her, and left everything in her hands, as she would have got you a situation, instead of dragging you into such a pit as this!" with an inclusive wave of his emaciated hand and a glance round the mean little attic. "But it won't be for long now, Maddy!" he added, in a lower tone.

"Oh, Hugh!" she almost screamed, as she seized his arm, "what are you saying? Why are you telling me such terrible things now that we have a little gleam of hope at last? It's cruel, cruel of you. You couldn't mean that after all we have gone through together, after all our troubles, that when we are just getting into smooth water at last, you—you would leave me?" and here she suddenly broke down and burst into tears; for, alas! she had a sharp inward conviction that there was some truth in what he said.

How pale and thin and weak he looked! No one would know him who had seen him last year,

and she had an agonising feeling that it was not mere actual illness, nor the dregs of that terrible fever that was to blame for this, but that cruel, pitiless, ferocious wolf—want. He was dying of the lack of mere necessities, and she, miserable woman, was powerless to procure them, and for this she laid her head down and wept as if her heart would burst—wept in a manner that Hugh had never seen anyone weep before—a manner that frightened him.

"Don't Maddie, don't," he whispered, feebly, stroking her hair, "you will be better without me, though you won't think so now. You are young—only nineteen. Many bright days may be in store for you yet, whilst mine are numbered. But I will leave you contentedly if your father has come home. The greatest dread I have ever known will be lifted from my mind! You don't know, dearest, what torments I have gone through as I lay awake through the long dark nights listening to the church clocks striking hour after hour, and wondering what would become of you! Now Providence has answered the question, and your natural protector will give you and the child a home, and—there now, Maddie, I can't bear to see you cry like this! I—I may get over it, you know; but it is best to prepare you for the—ah! now you see you have awakened the baby," as a shrill querulous yell from the next room, of which the door stood ajar, interrupted what he was going to say; and the maternal instinct thus suddenly roused, he hoped that her tears would cease, as he was powerless to stop them. And Madeline, completely broken down—Madeline, who was always so brave, and who had come out in a new and strong light under the searching, scorching flames of the furnace of affliction, was a sight that completely unmanned him.

Madeline hastily dried her eyes, struggled to stangle her long-drawn sobs, and took her shrieking offspring out of his cradle and gave him his midday bottle, which appeased his appetite and soothed his temper.

Then she came back to her husband, with the child in her arms, and said, in a broken voice,—

"If you had change of air, good food, properly cooked, fruit, wine, and little delicacies all sick people require, you would get well. I know you would!" passionately; "and, Hugh, if I have to steal them, you shall have them. Promise me—promise me you will try to get better," she continued, tremulously. "Promise that you will *wish* to get better, Hugh, for—for our sake."

"I can promise that, Maddie, at any rate," he replied, with a wan smile; "but you know the old proverb about wishes."

"And you know that 'while there's life there's hope,'" she returned, very quickly. "I have hope—you must have hope, too; and now I am going out, and you will have to mind baby. I will leave him with you. He will be very good; he will go off to sleep again directly," placing the white bundle beside his father, who eyed his charge dubiously as it stared at him stolidly, thumb in mouth.

Madeline hurriedly put on her hat and jacket, and, taking a key, unlocked her husband's old brass-bound desk, and after a little search drew out the red morocco case.

"Is it this?" she asked, holding it up. "This is what you mean?"

A nod assured her that she was right. "You would like to look at it once more," she said, gently, laying it in his hand. "Hugh, I don't know how to take it," she faltered. "You are so like her too," looking down at the little oval miniature of a pretty, spirited-looking girl, with dark eyes, dark curls, and a white dress, and seeing a suspicious moisture in her husband's eyes, also fixed greedily on the picture, "You were so fond of her, Hugh!"

"Not more than I am of you, Maddie," he answered, decisively, closing the case with a snap. "Here, take it, my dear, and go, and don't be long."

Needless to add this formula. Was she ever long? But time went slowly when Madeline was absent from those two poor little attics which she called "Home."

CHAPTER VII.

"He has not awoken since, has he?" asked the anxious mother as, fully an hour later, she reappeared with a bundle and a basket.

"No," with a sigh of relief.

"I see he is sound," laying down her load as she spoke. "And now to begin at the very beginning. Hugh," opening the basket, and producing a bottle, "there is some good port wine. I've carried it so carefully, not to shake it. You must have a glass at once—that is to be the beginning," hunting for a corkscrew.

"Oh, Maddie, what extravagance! when you—"

"Hush! please to listen," producing as she spoke a bunch of grapes, six fresh eggs, a tin of Liebig, and a packet of biscuits from her seemingly inexhaustive store, and laying them on the table.

"Then you are not going, and you have spent the money all on me!" exclaimed her husband, in a tone of deep disapproval.

"Yes, I am," she returned, promptly, now opening the bundle, and shaking out a dress that she had pawned, and looking at it with an expression on her face that showed that it was an old and favourite friend. "Here is an A B C Guide. I go to-night, when I've left you comfortable and baby asleep. Mr. Kane's step-niece has promised to look after you to-morrow, and to-morrow night I return, all being well."

"Then they gave you a good price for the miniature?"

"Price!" indignantly. "They turned it over and over, and sneered at it, and said they had no sale for such like; but they could not say it was not real gold and real pearls, and they gave me fifteen shillings, and said it was more than it was worth."

"Then how—where did you get money for your journey?" asked her husband, in a tone of amazement bordering on impatience.

"See here," she replied, holding up both her bare hands. "Very pretty hands they were, too, but now a little coarse from hard work. Do you miss anything, Hugh?" colouring guiltily.

"Your—your wedding ring and keeper," he answered, after a moment's pause—a moment of incredulity.

"You won't be angry with me, dear, will you?" she said, coming and kneeling down beside him. "It makes no real difference, does it?" now becoming extremely red. "Please, please, Hugh, don't be vexed; but I got thirty-five shillings on them, and they are the first things I shall redeem. I shall only take a single ticket, third-class. Mrs. Penn will surely lend me a few pounds, and I will be able to leave ten shillings for you to go on with."

"How can I be angry with you, Maddie?" said her husband. "It is my fault, the fault of my rashness, thoughtlessness, selfishness, that you have had to do all this, my poor child. Oh, that snowy night was a bad one for you. I ought to have left you, and walked back."

"Such nonsense!" cried his wife, whose spirits were rising. "I won't have you say such things. It's a long lane that has no turning. I think—oh, I believe and pray!—that I do see the end of ours. And now there's a nice roast chicken for your dinner. I left it with Mrs. Kane downstairs. She asked me if I had come in for a fortune when I brought it to the kitchen. A fortune, indeed! It was only two-and-threepence; but I told her that I believed I had. Oh, dear, oh dear! I hope my words will come true!"

Madeline's packing was represented by changing her dress. Her preparations were confined to brushing, rubbing up, and inking

her hat, mending her gloves, which, like the typical landlady, "had seen better days," and washing and getting up a collar and pair of cuffs with her own hands.

"You look quite smart, Maddie!" said Hugh, as she completed her toilet, and came and showed herself to him.

"Yes. I don't look so very, very poor, do I?" she asked, rather anxiously.

"No-o," dubiously; but he added, with a smile, "no one who looks at your face will think of your clothes; and, indeed, Maddie, it's not fit that a pretty young girl such as you look, and are, should be travelling third-class alone such a long journey."

"Rubbish, rubbish, rubbish!" she answered, emphatically. "I'll wear a veil, if that will please you; but no one will notice me. They will think I'm some poor girl going to a place, you stupid Hugh. You think everyone must admire what you thought pretty. And it's not my face that Mrs. Penn will notice—you may be sure of that."

Ten minutes later she had kissed the sleeping baby, taken leave of Hugh, given many whispered directions to Mrs. Kane's step-niece and a whole half-a-crown from her little fund, and with a beating heart and rather watery eyes started on foot for a distant terminus.

No, she would not even take a twopenny fare in a bus; she must save every penny, and she would have plenty of rest in the train, and so she had, of a sort, on the hard, wooden upright seats of a third-class carriage for eight mortal hours.

There is not much repose in such a situation, nor much sleep to be obtained, and the train roared along through the inky black night, and tore through small stations with a shriek of contempt that shook them to their foundations, and also nearly shook the teeth of unhappy third-class passengers out of their heads.

After a whole night's travelling of this uneasy description, Madeline arrived at her destination, the terminus of Riverford, and gladly alighted on the platform. One trouble was spared her—luggage.

She went and washed her face and hands, and arranged her hair and hat, and shook off some of the dust in the waiting-room, invested fourpence in a bun and cup of coffee, and felt herself fortified sufficiently to encounter Mrs. Penn, but not Miss Selina.

Another journey by rail—a short walk, and she found herself once more on the familiar doorstep of Penchester House, and rang timidly.

A strange maid (who knew not the delinquencies of Miss Grant) opened the door, rather surprised at such an early visitor.

She informed her that Mrs. Penn was not down yet, nor Miss Penn, and showed her into the drawing-room, which was in the act of being dusted; and here she waited for a considerable time, whilst a sound of footsteps and voices was very audible above her head.

She looked round the room and felt as if she had only quitted it yesterday—and, oh! what a gap there was in her life between the last time she had stood there, and listened to Miss Selina's spiteful remonstrances, and now! The room was just the same.

There was the best piano, on which she had had many a music lesson; there was Alice Burns's big coloured chalk drawing, Amy Watson's two water-coloured landscapes, Florence Blunt's bead mats, Isabella Carr's crewel work, all votive offerings to the Penn family, and advertisements to pupils' relations who came to make inquiries about the school. Presently the door was flung open and Miss Penn—if I may dare to say so—burst into the room.

"Oh, Madeline!" she exclaimed, "so it's you? How more than thankful I am," shaking hands and looking into her face with eager solicitude. "You are thin! but thin or fat you are welcome back. Come up at once to my mother's room, she's dressing—she does not come down early now—and she wants to

see you." (Here was an honour!) "Come, the girls are all in the schoolroom, and breakfast-bell will ring in a quarter of an hour," rising. "You have heard about Selina?" she asked, impressively, with two red spots on her cheeks, and a spark of fire in either eye. "Have you not heard?" she demanded, hurriedly.

Miss Selina! It was not of Miss Selina Madeline had come to hear, and she shook her head and answered "No."

"She's married. She married nearly a year ago," returned Miss Penn, impressively, "Mr. Murphy, the red-haired curate. She—she behaved atrociously—atrociously. Don't mention her to my mother, nor ask about her, we don't speak," flinging open the door wide, as she panted out the last sentence.

All the reply Madeline could find to make was "Indeed!" But she felt a very lively satisfaction to hear that her old enemy was no longer an inmate of Penchester House—had gone away as she once did, in disgrace.

"You will find my mother greatly changed," whispered Miss Penn, as she preceded Madeline upstairs, at a rapid pace; "she's had a slight stroke—all the trouble and anxiety about Selina—and she is not what she was! She never comes down until after early dinner, but take no notice."

"Madeline!" cried the old lady, as Madeline entered the room and beheld her propped up in bed in her best nightcap. "This is too good to be true. I scarcely expected it. Come here, my dear, and kiss me," tendering a withered cheek.

The old lady's mind was surely affected, thought her late pupil to herself. That she, who had been so ignominiously cast out, was thus welcomed back as a sort of prodigal daughter was scarcely credible, unless viewed from the idea that the old lady had become imbecile in the meanwhile. But no, the reason of this great change from the frost of neglect to the sun of welcome—affectionate welcome—was a very potent reason indeed. It was the prospect of a large sum of money.

Since Madeline had been banished nothing had gone well—her place taken by a governess had been quite an outlay—her want was felt. Then came Selina's wicked tampering with her sister's sweetheart, heartburning scandal, family linen sent to the public wash, and great falling off in the school.

Things were going badly, it was all downhill; one girl leaving after another—many vacant places round the long table.

At last came a letter from, of all people, Mr. Grant, enclosing a large draft on his bankers, and announcing his return, a wealthy and successful man.

The draft was to pay for two-and-a-half years' schooling, with interest; in short, up to date. But for fifteen months Miss Grant had been elsewhere! How could they honestly claim these badly-wanted pounds? And when Mr. Grant returned what were they to tell him? His daughter had been banished, they knew not where; and his money must be restored.

Viewed now in a softer light, Madeline's deeds were excusable. Madeline was Selina's victim, and to be pitied, not blamed. Madeline must be sought, and, if possible, found and reinstated as if nothing had occurred; and we have seen how Madeline had been discovered.

"Rebecca; you go down, and presently send up breakfast for two, whilst I have a talk with Madeline," said the old lady, who still had authority, though she had lost the use of her right hand. And Rebecca, having previously rehearsed the whole "talk" with her mother, and fearing that too many cooks might spoil the broth, went obediently.

"Take off your hat and jacket and gloves, and make yourself at home, my dear. I am sure you will not be surprised—put them on the ottoman—to hear that your father is alive and well, and is shortly returning home an immensely," dwelling lovingly on the word, "rich man."

Madeline's heart bounded, her face was in a flame. So her presentiment had come true!

"Ah! I see you are surprised; so were we, when we got his letter a fortnight ago. Here, bring me that case, the green one, on the little table, and I'll read it to you at once, or you may read it yourself, if you like."

Madeline did as she was desired, brought the case, picked out a foreign letter, in the well-known hand, and sat down to read it beside Mrs. Penn's bed, that lady having assumed her glasses for the nonce, gazing at her intently all the while.

This is what the letter said:—

"Port Royal, Jamaica.

"MY DEAR MRS. PENN.—After such a long silence you will be surprised to see my handwriting, I am sure, but here I am.

"I am afraid Madeline has been very uneasy about me, and, indeed, no wonder. I met with some terrible losses more than two years ago in mines in South America, and the anxiety and trouble through me into a fever. I was laid up for months, and when I again put my shoulder to the wheel, I made a vow not to write home till I was as rich a man as ever. I knew that you, who had the care of Madeline since she was mine, would trust me; and everything would go on as usual. I had always been such punctual pay, you would give me law for once. I am now, I'm glad to say, the richest man in the island; my mines, once so losing, have turned up trumps, and other investments ditto.

"I am coming home a millionaire, and Maddie shall keep house in style in London, and hold her own with the best.

"I heard a foolish story about some beggarly young man and her, but I am certain it was only a report; you would never allow my heiress to play the fool. If she did, she knows very well that I would disown her. I'm a fond father enough, and a good father, as you can testify; but I'll have no beggarly fortune-hunters or pulling love affairs. A hint to Madeline from you that at the least nonsense of that sort I marry again, and let her please herself.

"She's had a good education, she can earn her bread. But this, I believe, is not needful to go on with. You are a sensible woman, Madeline's a sensible girl. If she is my daughter I have views for her—very great views.

"I shall follow this letter in about six weeks' time, and will write again by leaving steamer, and you and Maddie can meet me at Southampton. I enclose a draft on my bankers of four hundred and fifty pounds—two hundred and fifty pounds for Madeline's schooling, &c. for two years, and the balance for pocket-money, and a few gowns that she may be smart when her old father comes home."

Madeline shook out the letter. No draft was to be seen.

"I have banked it," put in Mrs. Penn, who had been watching every change in her countenance, "it's all right," encouragingly.

"And now I must conclude, hoping soon to see you and Madeline, and with love to her, I am, yours faithfully,

"ROBERT GRANT."

"Well, now Madeline, what do you think of that?" demanded Mrs. Penn, removing and wiping her glasses.

"I'm very—very glad, of course," returned Maddie, her brain in a whirl, but now fully comprehending the reason of Mrs. Penn's blandishments and enthusiastic welcome.

"We are sorry, dear," soothingly, "that we were so hasty about Mr. Glyn; it was all Selina's doing—all—I assure you. I had no hand in it," impressively. "I'm truly thankful to see, especially after your father's letter, that you did not marry him."

"Not marry him!" echoed Madeline, colouring and glancing sharply at Mrs. Penn.

"What do you mean?"

"I see you are not married by your hand,"

pointing a long finger at Madeline's ringless finger. "Is not that sufficient proof?" sharply.

Madeline felt that she was at a crisis in her life, when she must take action at once. Her father's letter—Mrs. Penn's natural conclusion—their own dire want—all impelled her to the quick decision made on the instant. She would for the present temporise, at least till she had made her father's acquaintance; told him her own story, and accomplished pardon. Now to declare that she was a wife would be ruin—ruin to her—death to Hugh—for, of course, her father would cut her off with a shilling, and she knew that he had very strong prejudices—a grotesque adoration for rank and riches, and an abhorrence of the poor and needy, also that he was a man of his word. This she had gleaned long ago out in Jamaica, even at the early age of nine years. Her mind was made up, and at one second's notice, but with hands that shook as she folded up the letter, she reassumed the character of Miss Grant!

(To be continued.)

SIGNIFICANT PRESENTS.—People should be careful to avoid offence when giving presents. A gentleman recently presented to a young lady of his acquaintance one of those pretty and elegant little cases containing a nail polisher, scissors, cosmetics, and other implements for keeping the hands and nails in good order, and now they do not speak. She returned his gift as an insulting suggestion to her that her nails needed cleaning. He then sent the case to another young lady who was not so sensitive, for she kept it and made acknowledgment by forwarding a cake of scented soap. And now, strangely enough, his feelings are very similar to those of the first young lady.

LEARNING TO WRITE.

We believe that there is no single system of mechanism for writing, and that a child belonging to the educated classes would be taught much better and more easily if, after being once enabled to make and recognize written letters, it were let alone, and praised or chided, not for its method, but for the result.

Let the boy hold the pen as he likes, and make his strokes as he likes—hurry, of course, being discouraged, but insist that his copy shall be legible, clean, and shall approach the good copy set before him, namely, a well-written letter, not rubbishy text on a single line, written as nobody but a writing-master ever did or ever will write until the world's end.

He will make a muddle at first, but he will soon make a passable imitation of his copy, and ultimately develop a characteristic and strong hand, which may be bad or good, but will not be either meaningless, undecided or illegible.

This hand will alter, of course, very greatly as he grows older. It may alter at eleven, because it is at that age that the range of the eyes is fixed, and short-sight betrays itself; and it will alter at seventeen, because then the system of taking notes at lectures, which ruins most hands, will have cramped and temporarily spoiled the writing, but the character will form itself again, and will never be deficient in clearness or decision.

The idea that it is to be clear will have stamped itself, and confidence will not have been destroyed by worrying little rules about attitude, and angle, and slope, which the very irritation of the pupil ought to convince the teachers are, from some personal peculiarity, inapplicable.

The lad will write, as he does anything else that he cares to do, as well as he can, and with a certain efficacy and speed.

Almost every letter he gets will give him some assistance, and the master's remonstrances on his illegibility will be attended to, like any other caution given in the curriculum.

ONCE FOR ALL.

CHAPTER V.—(continued).

"AND Cecil," continued his uncle, kindly, "I am glad for another thing. You are rich and famous now; you have risen, as I knew you had the power in you to rise; you have no need of wealth, still I am glad that your father's property will return to you through the hands of my darling."

Cecil wrung his uncle's hand in silence, and went in search of Nesta.

He found her seated beneath the spreading branches of a large sycamore tree, with her faithful canine companion at her feet. There was a dreamy look upon her face, a look which changed to a smile of glad welcome as she saw who it was that approached her.

"Nesta, darling!" he said, tenderly, taking one of her little hands in his, "Nesta I have come to learn my fate. I think you love me, darling? Will you be my wife?"

And she, laying her head upon his breast, breathed a soft assent.

It was the old, old story, which yet is ever young.

Presently Nesta raised her head from his breast, and looking up at him with the love-light shining in her large blue eyes, said gently, "I have always loved you, I think, Cecil, from the time when I was a tiny child. I could never bear the thought of life separated from you. You are my first, as you will be my only love."

He shivered slightly at her words. The memory of the scorching fiery love of his youth came back to him. He felt almost undervalued of the pure love of this virgin heart.

"Nesta," he said, and his voice sounded hoarse with a great dread, "would it weaken your love for me to know that long years ago my love had been given to another, that in return for your first true affection I can only give you a second love—not so intense, if it is true—but believe me, my darling, much more lasting than that fiery passion? If you knew this would it rob me of your love?" His dark eyes were eloquent with pain as he poured out the rapid words. He felt he could not bear to lose this fair young love which had come to him in his maturity.

And she, wreathing her arms round his neck, answered fondly,—

"I do know it, Cecil. I know how nearly it wrecked your life. Oh! my love, my love, let it be my task to make you forget all you have suffered, and to prove to you, though one woman proved false there are others who are true."

The Countess of Highacres sat alone in her splendid drawing-room, surrounded by all the luxuries wealth could bring her.

Gems of painting, costly statuary, jewelled Sevres and masterpieces in bronze were scattered about in a profusion which alike testified to the taste as they showed the wealth of the fair mistress of that magnificent chamber.

Rose-coloured curtains softened the light which entered from the long windows, and threw a delicate rosy glow over the slightly-faded complexion which a more brilliant light would have been less merciful to. The air was heavy with the scent of exotics which filled vases and bowls.

Yet, though surrounded by all this magnificence, there was a look of anxiety and unrest on the face of Lady Highacres.

With her dark velvet robe sweeping gracefully about her, and a fan of white catfish feathers, with the sticks encrusted with jewels in her hand, she paced restlessly backwards and forwards, striving to still the commotion at her heart. Would he never come? Was this thing true that she had heard?

A few days before, at one of her "at homes," some of her intimate friends had been talking of Cecil Maybrooke. How her heart beat at the mention of his name!

She still loved him—still hoped that, sooner or later, he would return to the allegiance of his youth.

For his sake she had refused several advantageous offers of marriage which she had received. No man but Cecil would ever tempt her into the bonds of matrimony again. She had suffered too much in her first marriage.

Her fashionable friends, among other items of gossip, had mentioned Cecil's name. They spoke of his masterpiece, the Ariadne, and were loud in their praise of the sculptor whom the world had agreed to honour. Then they spoke of his private affairs. "By the way," said one portly dame, who had four daughters in the marriageable market, and who would have secured the prize they were talking about, "they say that the anchorite has at last seen the divinity who could woo him from his solitude; in other words, that he is going to be married."

"No, you really cannot mean it. I thought that Cecil Maybrooke was not for marrying or giving in marriage," returned another *grande dame*, languidly. The man who could be insensible to her charms must necessarily, he thought, prove adamant to everyone else's.

"Nevertheless," continued the first speaker, "they say it is a fact, but time will show."

"Who is the lady who has been fortunate enough to attract his fastidious notice?" queried a fair blonde, whose charms were slightly on the wane, and who had long cherished a secret attachment for the inaccessible and unimpassioned sculptor.

"Guess!"

"Someone of transcendent beauty, of course," scornfully.

"No. It must be a princess, at least, who could have any power over him."

"Bah! he never cared for rank. It must be someone with genius akin to his own," said a lady who prided herself upon being blue.

"Either an artist, poetess, or writer."

"Can it be Lady Mary Dart? I know he was at her house several times this season."

"He was quite as often at the Marchioness of Ville Floris; perhaps she is the fortunate one."

"Wrong, everyone of you," said the lady who had announced the fact of his engagement. "It is neither a beauty nor a princess, nor a genius who has taken captive our idol. He is a little country girl, with a face as babyish as her manners."

"But who is she?" chorused three or four voices together as the lady paused tantalizingly.

"She is—Nesta Maybrooke."

"Oh!" exclaimed several ladies together, in a disappointed tone. "What could he see in her? She is so very shy and unpolished."

"Perhaps that is the very reason she has attracted him. Doubtless he has seen through the veneer of society women and prefers to put the polish on himself," said one lady, rather spitefully.

"No, there is a deeper reason than that for it. I am certain," remarked the faded blonde.

"Do you not see by marrying Nesta Maybrooke he will get back all his father's possessions? Depend upon it, love has nothing to do with it; interest alone sways him in the matter."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed, with some asperity, a gentle little lady who had not yet taken any part in the discussion. "As if Cecil Maybrooke, with wealth and fame at his command, would marry for anything but love."

The ladies' tongues were silenced for a moment by this defence of the absent, but only for a moment, the blonde turning to the Countess of Highacres, and saying, in a tone which veiled a sneer beneath its sweetness,—

"By-the-way, *cherie*, were not you responsible for some of his coldness to women? I remember that your marriage was said to have broken his heart, as if men had any hearts to break. But, at all events, he seems to have consoled himself at last for your defection. You must be glad to hear that he is to be made happy with a woman whom he adores."

Though the words were silky soft, they stabbed their hearer to the heart. The speaker had discovered the proud Countess's secret, and, womanlike, delighted in probing to the core the wound which she had laid bare. It gratified her jealousy to be able to plant the poisoned darts more firmly in, for she could not forget or forgive the fact that Ozellah had been once the adored of this man who had never even noticed her existence.

Ozellah made her no answer. Her heart was throbbing with bitter pain. She longed, oh! how she longed that these women with their careless babble and chatter would go, and leave her alone with her misery.

When at last they had gone she sank into a chair with a weary sigh. Could it be true—her Cecil going to marry another? She had not known how strongly she had hoped Cecil would return to her until now that she had heard that he was lost to her forever.

Suddenly a thought struck her. It might not be true, there were so many chances floating about. This might be one of them. She would write to Cecil. She would not believe it till she heard it from his own lips. Without further thought or reflection she sat down at her escritoire, and wrote a note to him, asking him to come and see her on a certain day—nothing more. The letter contained no hint of what she had heard.

He had answered that he would come, and she waited for his coming with a feverish impatience very unlike her usual graceful calm. Unconsciously, as she swept up and down the room, her slender fingers twisted the snowy plumes she held in her hands till they were mangled and broken from their jewelled stems; impatiently she flung them from her as the velvet curtains were raised, and Cecil entered the room.

How vividly it recalled to her the day when Cecil had been the suppliant for the mercy which she had withheld from him! The tables were turned now, and it was she who was about to hear her doom.

In appearance Cecil was not much changed. The raven hair showed no sign of silver threads among it. The olive complexion, if a shade paler, was as clear as it had been in his youth. His bearing was as upright, his step as elastic as ever.

It was only in the eyes that a difference lay. They no longer burned with the fire of a consuming passion. They were as deep and velvety as in the days when they had only cared to look into hers, but as they looked at her now, she saw, with a pang of regret, that no tenderness for her softened them. They had a dreamy look, as if though she was before them they were looking at some beloved object far away.

She realised then, for the first time, that he was indeed lost to her—that her empire over him had passed away for ever, and another had usurped her place.

Cecil came forward with his hand outstretched. "You wished to see me, Lady Highacres; in what way can I be of service to you?"

Lady Highacres. Ozellah's heart sank within her. How very different his address had been in the olden time, but she steadied her voice as she answered him,—

"Yes, I sent for you because—"

"Well?" inquired Cecil, seeing she paused.

"Because, oh! Cecil, because I heard you were going to be married," she cried. "Tell me it is not true, that they have made a mistake."

"There is no mistake," he said gently. "I am going to marry Nesta Maybrooke."

"But you cannot love her?" she cried wildly. "You said there was no woman you could ever love as you loved me."

"And I said the truth," he answered, quietly. "The love I feel for Nesta Maybrooke is no more like the love I once bore you than a gentle brook flowing softly onward and refreshing the flowers upon its banks is like the foaming torrent that tears up everything in its mad course, and hurls it to destruction."

Such love as I gave you is only given once in a lifetime, but the love I give my darling is more deep and lasting; it will end only with my life."

His hearer shivered as she listened. "Come what will, you have loved me," she said.

"I loved you, yes," he answered, very gently, "but that is over and done with. Why recall the past that must be painful to us both?"

"Ah! it is easy for men to forget," she cried, bitterly, "but with women it is different."

He was silent. He would not reproach her by telling her that it was she who had thrown him over. Though he no longer loved her he pitied her, and the pity made him very tender to her.

"Forgive me, Cecil," she pleaded, with a sudden change of mood. "I did not mean that. It is I who have wronged you. I could not hope that you would love me always. I—I will pray that you may be happy with the woman you love." Her voice broke into a sob as she finished.

Cecil was shocked and pained at her grief. He had thought for all these years that she had not cared for him, and now the knowledge came upon him like a thunderbolt, for a time poisoning all his new-found joy.

"It is in vain to regret the past," he said, slowly, at length, "but I trust the future may hold much joy in store for you, as well as for me."

She shook her head sadly. "I willfully threw away my happiness," she said, mournfully. "Cecil, we may never meet again, tell me once that you forgive me." She clasped her hands pleadingly, and her eyes were full of unshed tears as she raised them to his.

Some memory of the olden days, when this woman had been the one woman in the world to him, came over him as he looked at her, suppliant in her radiant beauty.

"I have nothing to forgive; any wrong you might have done me was forgiven long ago," he said.

He raised her hand to his lips with the homage he would have given to an empress, then turned away and left her—left her to go out to the radiance that would shine over the life which for him and his fair young bride was just beginning—left her with the un-availing regrets and the repentance which shoddered that in giving him up she had done so. "Once for All."

[THE END.]

AN OLD DEED.—An aged couple walked into an upholsterer's and asked to look at some carpets. While the clerk was showing them some patterns of ingrains the proprietor of the store noticed the old people, and, approaching the clerk, told him to show them some of their best body Brussels. As he rolled out several pieces of rich carpets the old lady held up her hands and exclaimed: "Oh, we can't afford that!" The merchant asked her which pattern she liked best, and as she said, pointing to one roll, "That is just lovely," the merchant asked the size of the room, and told the clerk to cut and match the carpet and have it made up in time for the train by which the old people were to return. Seeing the blank look of astonishment that overspread their faces, the merchant asked: "Ain't your name so-and-so?" "Yes," they replied. "Didn't you keep a tavern at such a time and at such a place?" They replied in the affirmative. "And didn't you have a boy at one time who minded bar for you named [name]?" "Yes, yes; and we have often wondered whatever became of him." "Well," said the merchant, "I am that boy, and when I kept the bar for you I stole money enough from you to carpet your whole house. Take the carpet and say nothing more about it." It is needless to say that they took it.

THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE PAST.

I HAVE watched the first flushing of dawn,
As it scattered the shades of the night,
And tinted the colourless clouds
With blushes of roseate light;
When the beams of the glorious day-god,
Although not yet risen to view,
Were clothing the landscape in beauty,
And creating all nature anew.

Again, when the eve was declining,
And the monarch had sunk to his rest,
The glories of sunset still lingered,
And crimson the skies in the west;
And I knew not which scene was most gorgeous,
Which clouds most resplendently bright—
The heralds which told of his coming,
Or those which had bathed in his light.

And so, in the morning of life,
We are brightened by joys yet unborn,
And hope's rosy visions dispel
The mists and the darkness of dawn.
But when that bright season is over,
And the shadows are lengthening fast,
The scenes which we dwell on most fondly
Are gilded by rays from the past.

L. H.

THE FAIR ELAINE.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL.

MANY weeks went by, and one would scarcely have recognized in the quiet, hard-working lawyer, who toiled early and late with such persistence and energy, the idle, defiant, unprincipled man who had heartlessly dragged his wife away from home and friends, subjecting her to almost every kind of discomfort, and refusing to put forth a single effort for her support.

Philip had not yet ascertained where Arley was, and the letter which he had written, with her jewels and money, were still in his keeping.

He could not make up his mind to call upon Miss McAllister to obtain her address, for he dreaded both her questions and her displeasure. He had heard that she was something of an invalid and did not go out at all, so he hoped she had not yet heard of his return.

She had not, and it was known but by very few outside those doing business with him, for he did not frequent his old haunts; he shunned his club and all society, devoting every hour, not needed for rest, to his business.

When questioned by any old friends who chanced to meet him as to why he had returned alone, he invariably replied that his business needed him, but that Mrs. Paxton had an opportunity to extend her travels with friends, and her return was indefinite.

He was sure that this was no untruth, for he surmised that Arley had indeed found friends through the young Englishman who had so nobly espoused her cause in Madrid, and he believed that she would shrink from coming back to have her story known, and to encounter the scandal which would ensue.

He had resolved that he would shield her in every possible way; he would speak no word to feed the eager, hungry gossip, until she should make her appearance and institute some action against him.

His business increased so rapidly that he was obliged to get help, and the gold which he had so covetously poured in upon him from every quarter; but every pound over and above his actual needs he conscientiously deposited in the Bank of England, to swell the account in Arley's name.

He had resolved to lay up a competence for

her; she should have an income sufficient to supply her with every comfort to which she had been accustomed before she became his wife, if it was in his power to secure it to her.

It was all the reparation that he could make her now, though his heart often sank as he thought that in her pride and contempt for him she might refuse to appropriate it.

And so six months went by in this busy way. At the end of that time he balanced his accounts, and was astonished with the result.

"This is not bad for a beginning," he said, as he looked at the generous figures. "A few years like this, and I could put Arley back where I found her."

"Ah, no!" he added, in a tone sharp with pain. "I could give her her twenty thousand pounds, perhaps, but I can never give her back her free, happy life—I can never blot from her memory the bitterness, the pain, and disgrace which I have since inflicted upon her. Oh, Arley, my beloved! why did I not appreciate the prize I had won? If I had but heeded your counsels I should now have you and happiness, together with my property!"

"Fool! fool!" he cried, leaping wildly to his feet, as if he could not bear the thought of it: "you are rightly punished! No fate, however wretched, no penance can be too severe for you; you have brought it all upon yourself, and you must bear it as best you can!"

There came a rap at his chamber door just then, but it took him more than a minute to compose himself sufficiently to go and answer the summons.

It was only the postman, who silently handed him an official-looking document, and then hastened away again.

In a listless way Philip broke the seals and proceeded to inspect its contents, supposing it to be something connected with his own business.

But after he had read a page or two he was seized with amazement, and perused the remainder of the communication with breathless interest.

That old adage, "It never rains but it pours," seemed destined to prove true for Philip Paxton, for he learned that a widowed aunt and her whole family, consisting of a son and two daughters, who lived in Wales, had been suddenly swept out of life by that dread disease, diphtheria. The children had first fallen victims to it, and then the worn-out, heart-broken mother had lain down to follow them.

She was the widow of the late Sir Frederick Sharpley, Baronet, who had been Philip's mother's only brother, and the paper which he held in his trembling hands told him that he, being the nearest living relative, was heir to the estate and title of his uncle.

He could not realize it; it had come upon him so suddenly, so wholly unexpected, that he actually could not comprehend it, and sat staring at the document in a way that would have been ludicrous under any other circumstances.

Twice he was obliged to read it through before he could realize that it was not all a vision of his own imagination. But it was all therein black and white; the family lawyer had made it very plain, and had written him immediately after Lady Sharpley's funeral, at her request.

She would allow no notice to be sent him of her children's death, on account of the fear of contagion, and when she found that she also could not live, she exacted a promise that he should be told nothing for the same reason, until she should be laid in the family vault, and the house thoroughly purified, lest he, too, contract the fatal disease, and the estate, for the lack of an heir, fall to the crown.

"Tell him," were her last words, "to be a good, an honourable man, and keep the title unspotted. There has never been a stain upon the fair escutcheon of the family, and my personal legacy to him is, its purity—let him maintain it as long as he shall live."

It was with a very white face that Philip at length folded up that startling communication and fell to musing upon its contents.

The estate of the late Sir Frederick, the lawyer wrote, was a remarkably fine one, wholly unencumbered, and with a rent-roll of nearly fifteen thousand pounds, while there was a bank account yielding nearly as much more.

How strangely fortune's wheel turns round!

Coming just at this time, Philip felt as if he could not bear these new honours which had been heaped so unexpectedly upon him, and bowing his head upon his desk he groaned aloud, feeling humiliated and crushed as he had never felt before.

If he could only have blotted out the last two years, or if he could begin them over again how differently he would live.

His aunt's solemn legacy had been the "purity of the family name" to maintain; while if the truth should be revealed, he would enter upon his new inheritance cumbered with shame and dishonour.

"If I could only have known," he said, "my life need not have been a wreck."

If I had known! How many give utterance to those words? But it is not Heaven's purpose that we should know. A noble life consists in doing right for the sake of the right.

Two years ago Philip Paxton would have been exultant over his good fortune. It would have placed him just where he had wished to be. He could have gratified every taste—he could have allowed his affection for Arley to have full play; the loss of her fortune would have made no difference: he would have married her and surrounded her with every luxury within his reach, and they might have been happy to this day.

But instead, he had, by his stubborn wickedness, sacrificed his manhood, proved a traitor to his dearest friend, brought down upon himself the scorn and aversion of Lady Elaine, and forfeited the affection of the only woman whom he could ever love.

What were houses, lands, rent-rolls, or bank accounts to him now? They were like the "Dead Sea apples that turn to ashes in the grasp."

His new position would bring him no happiness; it could not restore to him either his own self-respect or Arley's love—the only two things which seemed really worth anything just now to him.

But with new honours came new cares; his inheritance must be looked after, and as soon as he could arrange his business so as to leave it, he repaired to Elmford, as Sir Frederick's estate had been called.

He found it a beautiful place. The mansion itself was very old, but, having been built in a most substantial way and kept in thorough repair, with modern conveniences from time to time, it was a house to love and be proud of. The grounds about it had been laid out with exquisite taste and judgment, and were considered the finest in the county. There was a deer-park, abounding in deer, for Lady Sharpley had allowed no hunting since her husband's death, five years previously; while the wide-spreading upland and meadow on every hand were rich with grain and herbage.

There was a fine picture-gallery in the mansion, containing works of some of the best artists—both of sculptors and painters—of several centuries, and there was a wealth of plate, of solid silver, that was fairly dazzling to the eyes.

As Philip Paxton roamed over his new possessions, visiting room after room, noting the beauty and elegance of everything about him, no smile came to his lips, no gladness to his heart, for it all seemed to mock at him, to jeer at the emptiness of his soul.

How happy he might have been had he but done right; had not his own relentless hand dashed the cup from his lips.

There could never, while he lived, be any mistress at Elmford; there would never be the music of childish voices, or the patter of

little feet in those airy rooms and lofty halls, and when he should be done with it, the very doom which Lady Sharpley had so much dreaded would fall upon it; for the lack of an heir it would go to the crown.

Thus Philip reasoned within himself, and with exceeding bitterness, as he made a mental inventory of his treasures. He felt that he could never live there alone, surrounded by all that magnificence; it would be but a mockery to drive him wild, while nothing would ease his recently aroused and smarting conscience but diligent, unceasing labour.

Mr. Farley, the steward, appeared to be a competent, trustworthy man, and he was much pleased with him.

He had received the young baronet with great courtesy and friendliness, conducting him over the estate with evident pride in its fine appearance, while his books, upon examination, showed excellent business capacity; and Philip resolved to leave the management of it still in his hands—at least for the present—while he returned to his own labours in London.

There was no longer any need of this, pecuniarily, but work had become a mental necessity; it would not do to stop; he must not have time to brood over his past, lest his remorse and misery drive him to desperation.

So giving Mr. Farley full control, Sir Philip Paxton went back to his close chambers in Gray's Inn, leaving all this beauty and luxury behind him, and plunged more assiduously than ever into his business.

He said nothing to anyone regarding his brightened prospects, nor so much as hinted of the title that had fallen upon him, and thus no one suspected his altered circumstances.

How he had plotted and schemed for what had now come to him without an effort of his own!

How he had coveted the handling of Lady Elaine's fortune, believing that he should be supremely content if his object was once achieved!

But now, with an income exceeding hers, with a position which would give him influence among, and the respect of men, there was no sense of satisfaction; it was comparatively useless, for he had no one to share it with him, and no heart to enjoy it alone.

But one thing he had resolved upon, and now carried it into action.

To the sum which he had already deposited in the Bank of England he added enough to make it up to the amount which Arley had so cheerfully made over to Ina Wentworth, and then he paid a visit to her old lawyer.

"Ah, Mr. Paxton!" he exclaimed, as Philip entered his office, while he shook him warmly by the hand; "I did not know you had returned, but am glad to see you back again. How is that noble-hearted little woman of yours?"

"Mrs. Paxton is still abroad, sir," Philip quietly responded.

"What! didn't she return with you?" asked Mr. Holley, in surprise, while he directed a keen glance into his visitor's face, which struck him as being much too grave and pale to belong to a happy young husband.

"No," he replied; "I was obliged to return—you know a young lawyer needs to apply himself if he would rise; but Mrs. Paxton is with friends, and will travel awhile longer. However," he added, hastily, in order to prevent any more questions, "that will not interfere with a little matter of business which I wish to leave in your hands, if you do not object."

"Anything that I can do for you I shall be very glad to do," Mr. Holley answered, cordially.

"Thank you. You know that until our marriage Mrs. Paxton had been accustomed to an independent income; you know, too, how nobly she relinquished her fortune when she found that she had no longer a right to it—"

"That I do, bless her honest little heart!" interrupted the lawyer, heartily.

"Well," Philip pursued, anxious to get through with this trying business, "I resolved that, as soon as it was in my power to do so I would make it up to her, and I have recently deposited twenty thousand pounds in the Bank of England in her name, and have brought you the papers declaring the settlement to take charge of. I thought it might seem more real to her," he exclaimed, seeing Mr. Holley's look of surprise and inquiry, "if she should receive the income from you the same as in the old times; besides, I wish to guard against any contingency, such as an accident or a fatal illness to myself."

"Surely you do not apprehend anything of the kind?" remarked his companion, again observing his pallor, and also how thin he had grown since he last saw him.

"Oh, no; yet it is wise to be prepared, and such settlements are very common, you know. You will not refuse my request?"

"Certainly not; and it is most proper and considerate of you to do this, while it will give me great pleasure to be able to pay over to my favourite the old amount. I declare I never experienced more regret over any loss in my life than over your wife's on her wedding-day. But Mr. Paxton, your business must have been very lucrative to admit of your settling such a fortune as this upon her," Mr. Holley concluded, wondering where all the money had come from.

"Yes, it has been," Philip tried to answer indifferently, though he flushed slightly; "and I will tell you in confidence," he added, "that I have had something of a wind fall, which has helped me in this matter."

"Oh! ah!" and Mr. Holley's perplexity vanished instantly.

He knew that a young barrister does not often lay up a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, under the most favourable circumstances, during a year or two of practice in London, where there are so many competitors.

"I congratulate you," he went on, "and regard it as very considerate of you to settle it on your wife. When does Mrs. Paxton return?"

Philip's heart flew to his mouth at this query, and for a moment he found it impossible to reply.

"She has not written me yet just when," he said evasively; "and this money which I have deposited will have to remain on interest until she does return. I will see, however, that you are notified when she needs her income."

Philip did not wait to be questioned any further; he pleaded an engagement and took his leave, feeling that he had managed the matter quite cleverly, and much relieved to know that at last Arley was secure from all future want or pecuniary embarrassment.

If he could only feel sure that she would not resent it—that she would accept it as her right, and use it freely for her comfort—he would be at rest.

But he knew that she was very proud, and if she had succeeded in supporting herself abroad she might insist upon doing so at home, if she ever returned—he began to think that perhaps she might remain away to escape unpleasant developments.

However, he had done what he could to atone for his neglect and ill-treatment, and he must leave the result for time to disclose, and so he went back to his work, striving to school himself to patient endurance.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RING.

"Miss McAllister, do you know the name of the vessel in which Arley was sent home from India?"

This question was asked by Lady Elaine, who called to see that lady the day following her visit to Captain Conway at Portsmouth.

She had been telling her something of Jane Collins, and her meeting with Arley in Madrid,

and of the story which had been elicited by Arley's resemblance to the beautiful lady who had been rescued by the *Black Swan*.

She did not, however, say anything about her troubles. She thought that if Arley had written nothing about them herself it was because she still wished to conceal them; though with Philip in London she did not see how it was possible for her to remain in ignorance much longer.

Miss McAllister complained that Arley's letters were very indefinite and unsatisfactory, at least about herself and her husband.

In mentioning any contemplated change, she would merely say, "we are going to— to-morrow; we expect to be in— next week;" leaving the reader to infer that "we" meant Philip and herself, though she never entered into details except in her descriptions of places and things.

The last letter that they had from her had been written from Rome, where she had spent nearly three months, but was soon to go for a time to Naples.

She said not a word about returning at present, and her letters were usually written in a cheerful, or at least a tranquil strain; a fact which greatly surprised Lady Elaine, for Arley had been of a passionate, impulsive, and rather imperious temperament, and she would have looked for rebellion and recklessness, rather than this unnatural calm and neutrality.

"Yes," Miss McAllister returned to her question, "it was the *White Star*."

"No—I mean the name of the vessel by which she was rescued, not the one that was wrecked."

"Oh, that was the *Vulcan*."

Lady Elaine wrote the name down on her tablets.

"What was the name of the captain of the *Vulcan*," she asked.

"That I do not remember—it has gone from me; but it will be in my brother's diary. Ina, dear, please hand it to me from the upper drawer in his desk; there are three volumes, bring me the second," the old lady said to Ina Wentworth, who, under the influence of happiness, and surrounded by every luxury, has grown a hundredfold more beautiful than when we saw her for the first time on Arley's wedding-day.

"But why are you so very eager about these particulars?" Miss McAllister continued to Lady Elaine, as Ina rose to do her bidding.

"Because," she answered, with heightening colour, "I believe if I follow this clue closely, I shall discover who Arley's parents were. I cannot help thinking that she is this lost baby, Alie, for whom that poor mother mourned so, and if I can but find the captain of the *Vulcan*, I believe he will be able to give me valuable information. Have you any of the clothing that she wore home at that time?"

"Nothing but her little shoes and stockings and a tiny ring set with an emerald. Her clothing was so soiled and defaced by the seawater that we did not preserve it."

"A little ring set with an emerald!" repeated Lady Elaine, quickly, not heeding the rest of Miss McAllister's sentence, while a quick, eager flush mounted to her forehead—"a ring, or a jewel of any kind, is often the key to such mysteries; may I see it?"

"Of course you may see it," the old lady returned, with an indulgent smile, "but I hardly think it will prove anything unless you first find the parents to identify it, for there might be a hundred such rings in the world. When it got too tight for Arley's little fingers I put it away with the shoes and stockings, and have always regarded them as sacred relics, since they were all that remained of of her parents' loving care for her."

"Now dear," she added, as Ina came forward and laid Dr. McAllister's diary in her lap, "in the second drawer of my *ecritoire* you will find a small box tied with a blue ribbon; will you please bring that to me also," and the beautiful girl, always attentive to her slightest

wish, hastened to get it, and at a gesture from her aunt handed it to Lady Elaine.

But her fingers trembled so with excitement and eagerness that she could not unfasten the knot in which the ribbon was tied.

Miss McAllister reached out her hand and gently took it from her.

"My dear, how excited you are over a trifle," she said. "There is nothing here which can possibly prove anything, unless, as I said, before you can find the parents themselves."

She untied the knot, lifted the cover, and then laid the box back in her visitor's lap.

There were two little packages in it, wrapped about with tissue paper, showing that a loving hand had cared for the contents.

Lady Elaine lifted one and took the paper from it. Two tiny shoes fell out. They were wrinkled and worn, stained and defaced with sea-water, while their little buttons were blackened and tarnished with time.

There were three buttons on each, and Lady Elaine examined these carefully—so carefully that Miss McAllister gave vent to a low, amused laugh.

"My dear," she said, "they are nothing but common buttons, such as you would find upon any child's shoe; did you expect to find a coat-of-arms engraven upon them?"

Lady Elaine smiled, but did not reply.

There was a flush still on her face, and her eyes glittered strangely.

The little things appeared to possess a peculiar fascination for her, for she looked them over and over, and almost turned them inside out, but apparently without making any discovery, for she soon laid them down with a soft sigh, and took the other little roll from the box.

It contained a pair of blue silk stockings of very small dimensions, evidently hand-knit, but faded and streaked, and full of holes where ten little chubby toes had tried to work their way out.

The fair girl sat and gazed upon them, as if spellbound, while two great tears welled to her eyes and dropped upon them.

"How well you love my poor Arley," Miss McAllister said, her own eyes growing moist as she observed her emotion, but she believed that it was caused by disappointment at not having discovered anything tangible with which to prosecute her search.

"The little ring," she added, "you will find in another box inside the one you have got there."

Lady Elaine found it, opened it, and on a bed of pink cotton lay a plain gold ring, having a small but beautiful emerald set in it.

The ring was quite a heavy one for its size, and the stone, instead of being set up in a crown, was let into the circle itself.

"Oh!" cried Lady Elaine, as she caught sight of it, and she seemed about to say more, but checked herself.

"It is a beautiful little stone, is it not? and quite an expensive one, too, I should judge," remarked Miss McAllister. "I used often to wonder how Evelyn happened to buy such a thing for a baby. I once told my brother that I never knew her to do a really extravagant thing before, but I might have spared her that reproach, since she was never guilty of it. Her husband had a captain's pay and a private income besides, while her father gave her a handsome allowance; but she had been taught not to spend money foolishly, and I do consider it foolish to deck children out with precious stones."

"May I take these things for a little while, Miss McAllister?" Lady Elaine asked, as she laid the shoes, and stockings, and ring back in their places, and covered them with an almost reverent hand. "I will guard them as I would a priceless treasure, and see that nothing happens to them," she added, appealingly.

"Certainly; you can take them and keep them as long as you think you may need them. I never attached any importance to anything but the ring until we discovered that our dear

Arley did not really belong to us—I merely kept them because I thought she would prize them as being the last things that her mother had provided for her.

"But we had nearly forgotten about the captain of the *Vulcan*," she continued, taking up and opening the diary which Ina had brought her.

She turned the leaves until she found the date of Arley's return, and after reading a few pages, she looked up, saying:

"It was Captain Simons, dear; but that is all I can find about him—there is no mention of anything regarding him, save his name. I am afraid you will find it a hard matter to find him, and even if you should, I do not see that he could tell you much. You must remember that a sailor from the *White Star* rescued Arley, and the captain of the *Vulcan* would know nothing, except what he could tell him, or what he could learn from her prattling speech."

"That is so—he could tell me nothing—how blind I have been. Of course if he had known there would never have been such a blunder about her in the first place," and Lady Elaine looked much disturbed over her short-sightedness.

"I can see only one hope of getting at the root of this matter, and that is to find the captain of the *White Star*, if he is living," Miss McAllister said, after a few moments of thoughtful silence. "You say that this Collins woman told you that the lady and gentleman who were rescued by the *Black Swan* were passengers on the *White Star*? Arley, too, left India on that vessel, and our only way of learning anything is to find the captain or some other officer who served upon it."

"Who brought Arley to you?" Lady Elaine asked, as if inspired by some sudden thought.

"A poor woman who was flying from poverty and pestilence in France, and who hoped to find friends and help here in London. She had lost a little one just before leaving home, and gladly took charge of Arley during the remainder of the voyage after she was rescued."

"But there were others rescued at the same time, were there not?" asked Lady Elaine anxiously.

"Oh yes, several."

"And did no one know anything about the child? Oh, it seems so strange that there should be all this mystery when others were saved from the same vessel!" and Lady Elaine was greatly agitated.

"Yes, it is strange; but you know that every one is for himself at such a time; the sailor told the captain that she was the child who was to be sent to Dr. McAllister, of London, and he immediately gave her to the first one who was willing to assume the care of her. This woman—Mary Nelson was her name—yearned for the little one, cared most tenderly for her until the vessel reached port, when he ordered a carriage for her and sent her to us with the child."

"God bless her, and the sailor also who saved her!" cried Lady Elaine, with streaming eyes.

"My dear, I am afraid you are getting very nervous and excited over this matter," Miss McAllister said gravely, as she looked into the flushed, beautiful face.

"What became of this woman afterwards?" Lady Elaine asked, struggling for composure.

"She died."

"Died?" interrupted her listener.

"Yes. My brother was so grateful to her for the services which she had rendered Arley, and she appeared to be so fond of her, that he at once took her into the family as her nurse. But she only lived three months. She took the typhus fever, and died very suddenly."

Lady Elaine sighed heavily.

"I do not see as there is any hope but to find the captain of the *White Star*," she said.

"No dear, and that, I fear will be a doubtful

undertaking; for so many years have elapsed since that wreck that I fear he might not be living, even if he succeeded in escaping at that time, which is also doubtful, as a captain is usually the last one to leave his vessel."

Mrs. McAllister certainly was not in a very encouraging mood to-day.

"Do you know what line the *White Star* belonged to?" her visitor asked, with a very downcast face.

"I do not know," was the reply. "You will have to go to some one who has a vessel register or directory—I should suppose almost every shipowner would have one—and you will doubtless find out there who was the owner of it, and, with that knowledge gained, it will be comparatively easy to learn who had been its captain."

(To be continued.)

WATCHES.—Edward VI. appears to have been the first Englishman to wear a watch, and this consisted of "one larum gilt, with two plummetts of lead;" that is to say, it was driven by weights. This is supposed to have been received by the king as a present from Nuremberg, and was playfully called a Nuremberg animated egg. The word "watch" was derived from an Anglo-Saxon word, meaning to wake. The first portable timepiece of which we have any record was that of the Chinese pocket dial mounted upon the head of a cane or carried by a chain round the neck. Queen Elizabeth had a watch in shape like a duck, with chased feathers, the lower part of which opened, and the face or dial of silver ornamented with a gilt design. The outer case was of brass, and that in turn was covered with black leather ornamented with silver studs. Mary Queen of Scots gave a curious token of affection to her faithful maid-of-honour, Mary Seaton, in the shape of a watch in the form of a skull, the dial occupying the place of the palate and the works that of the brains. The hours were marked in Roman letters. A bell in the hollow of the skull received the works, and a hammer struck the hours.

FRUGAL LIVING.—The Paris correspondent of the *Lancet* writes:—"After a service of more than half a century as director of the Gobelins Manufactory, M. Chevreul, the illustrious chemist, has been placed on the retired list; and, although in less than two years he will have completed one hundred years of age, he considers that he has not been well treated. It would appear, however, that, in order to spare the feelings of the old gentleman, he has been allowed to retain his appointment, with the full salary attached to it. The Municipal Council of Paris has given his name to a new street in this city, an honour rarely conferred on persons while yet living. The following short account of his habits may be of some interest. He is generally lightly clad, and wears no hat, unless under circumstances in which he is obliged to appear in one. Indeed, he hardly needs a hat, as he has most luxuriant hair. He is constantly at work, allowing only ten minutes for each of his meals, of which he has but two a-day. He breakfasts at seven, the repast consisting of a plate of meat and another of vegetables, which he eats together, the whole being washed down with two tumblers of water. He is said to have never drunk a glass of wine in his life. He dines at seven in the evening, and takes nothing between the two meals except a small loaf at noon, which he eats standing and by the side of his alembics. The writer who relates this states that, on a visit to M. Chevreul, he found him in the attitude just described; and, on expressing his surprise at the frugal manner in which he lived, M. Chevreul observed, 'I am very old (this was in 1874); and I have yet a great deal to do, so I do not wish to lose my time in eating.' This example of longevity is certainly a good argument in favour of temperance and regularity of living."

CLIFFE COURT.

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CHAPTER V.

THE morning sunshine was coming in a flood of radiance through the square-paned windows of Lady Carlyon's sitting-room, glinting on pictures and vases and flowers, and making Arline Lester's head look like that of an aureoled saint; for those wonderfully tinted curls of hers, that seemed chestnut in the shadow, became bright gold when the light played amongst them.

She was sitting at the table, with a pen and note-book in her hand, and opposite Lady Carlyon, whose pale face and heavy eyes betokened a sleepless night.

"Would you imagine it possible! I have been here three weeks!" she exclaimed, suddenly.

"Have you, indeed? Time passes very quickly—or, perhaps, it is your presence that has made me fancy so."

"You put it very prettily," Arline said, smiling, and coming over to the couch to sit by her side. "I have been very happy with you, but I must really see about leaving soon."

"Why should you? I wish you would stay with me always."

Arline shook her head—this was impossible; for her proud spirit would never have submitted to a life of dependence while she had health and strength to work.

"I want to find something to do soon, but it seems rather difficult."

"I was speaking to Herbert Cliffe about you last night, and asking him if he knew of anything that would suit you."

"Well—and did he offer any suggestion?"

"None—except"—Arline smiled—"that you should go to Cliffe Court as housekeeper."

"Did he mean it—seriously?"

"I don't know, but I should think not; you would surely not undertake such a post?"

"Why shouldn't I? One situation is as good as another, provided it is respectable," said Arline, stoutly; "and I have a decided domestic talent, so I've been told. What has become of their former housekeeper?"

"She is ill, and can't get about. Certainly, she is a very nice person, and superior to her position, being the widow of our old village doctor, who died very poor. Lord Cliffe invariably treats her with the greatest possible respect."

"As he would treat me if I went there," laughed the young girl. "Joking apart, Alicia, I don't think I could do better than apply for the vacant post—I should infinitely prefer it to governessing."

Lady Carlyon meditated for a few minutes. Brought up in the conventionalities of society, it seemed to her that Arline would incur the risk of losing caste by taking upon herself the duties of a sort of upper-servant; but the girl was old enough to judge for herself, and she had no one else's feelings to consult.

"You must do as you think best, Lina," she said, at last; "I have no doubt you would find Cliffe a very comfortable home, and you would have nothing to do save give orders, and see they were obeyed."

"And you think Lord Cliffe would give me the situation?"

"There is not much fear but that he would if I asked him, and said you were a friend of mine."

"But that is just what I don't wish you to do!" exclaimed Arline eagerly. "I want to go entirely on my own merits—such as they are—and to exact only as much consideration as if I had been brought up with no other expectation than that of fulfilling my present capacity—do you understand?"

"I think I do, you very independent little person."

"And I am right, am I not?"

"Perhaps so—indeed, I think I may say you certainly are."

"I am glad you agree with me," Arline said, kissing her, "for independent as you call me, I am only a weak woman after all, and I like other people's opinions to coincide with my own. You see the case just resolves itself into this—I have to gain my own living, and there might be something incongruous in Lady Carlyon's friend in such a position as housekeeper at Cliffe, so if you simply introduce me as a person you know, and can recommend, it will be quite sufficient, and much better than saying we are old schoolfellows."

"Herbert Cliffe knows it already."

"But his uncle does not?"

"No—it is not probable he has heard anything at all about you."

"All the better. Shall I write to him, or seek a personal interview?"

"I will write for you, if you like; and manage it all, but I expect they will want you to go pretty soon, as Mrs. Belton is unable to attend to anything; and the fact of Lady De Roubaix being there makes it more important that the *menage* should go on smoothly."

"Who is Lady De Roubaix?"

"Lord Cliffe's niece—his only sister's child."

"She does not live there always?"

"No, but from a few words she said last night I fancy she has no intention of leaving yet awhile. She is very beautiful, but I can't say I exactly like her. She looks haughty and imperious—the sort of woman who would let no scruple stand in the way of any purpose she might desire to accomplish."

"She won't trespass on my domain, or I on hers," said Arline gaily; "so I suppose we shall have no opportunity of falling out, and I must curb my naturally impetuous temper, and become very amiable and submissive to the powers that be. I wonder if I shall find the task a hard one?"

Lady Carlyon took Arline's pretty fingers in hers, and said rather sadly:—

"It does not seem right that you should be debared the pleasures and gaiety that girls of your age naturally expect. Your life ought to be so bright and happy."

"And so it will be," Arline responded, quickly; "and any regret I may once have had I have conquered, and I accept my lot with perfect content. I have made up my mind to be a model old maid, and show the world one does not require to be married in order to be happy."

Arline shook her head.

"All very fine talking, Arline; but what of the love that comes to every woman some time or other?"

"Does it come, or does she only fancy it?"

"It is not always fancy—better perhaps, if it were."

"Well, so far I have been free, and I must guard against all possibilities—about my ears against the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. I suppose it's people's own fault when they fall in love."

"Cupid is blind."

"Yes—willfully, sometimes, but I shall keep my eyes open, and so walk in safety!"

"I wonder if in twelve months you will tell the same story," said Lady Carlyon, smiling, and then she went to her desk and wrote off the letter to Lord Cliffe, in which she said just as much concerning her *protégée* as she felt the circumstances required.

A reply soon arrived, containing the Viscount's best thanks for her coming to his assistance in their present domestic emergency, and requesting that Miss Lester should lose no time in entering on her duties as Mrs. Belton's substitute.

So the very next day Arline said "good-bye" to the Chace, and was driven through the sunshine up the grand chestnut avenue to Cliffe Court, and when she arrived taken direct to Mrs. Belton's room, where she found that lady in bed, and rather disposed to look with eyes of suspicion on her would-be helper.

"You are so very young!" she observed,

dissatisfied, and scanning Arline from the crown of her sun-kissed hair to her little neatly shod feet.

"Not so very young—nearly twenty, and, besides, I have been used to domestic duties all my life."

"Well," said Mrs. Belton, with a sigh, "this is no time to pick and choose, and one must put up with what one can get. But mind you, Miss Ester"—very sharply—"although I am in fact, and not able to see to things myself, I'm not going to give to my authority. I shall tell you what to do, and you must do it."

"Certainly," answered Arline, good temperedly.

"After all, you won't have so much to look after, for the servants are very good"—when Mrs. Belton was well the servants were the worst that ever lived, and gave her more trouble than all the rest in Christendom put together—"and if they are only managed properly, things work as smoothly as machinery. No doubt, though," disconsolately, "they won't care to be ordered about by a young childlike you."

"I must tell them I don't act as mistress on my own responsibility, but on yours."

"Hum!" answered the housekeeper, hardly knowing whether to be pleased at this apparent submission, or to look upon it as a piece of artfulness on the part of a maid who was desirous of stepping into her own shoes, and tried to disguise her designs under a cloak of sweet humility.

CHAPTER VI.

ARLINE was very much incensed over her new duties, and, to tell the truth, rather disappointed that they proved so light. She had really very little to do; the staff of servants had been kept in excellent order, and the general *ménage* so well regulated that it went, as Mrs. Belton said, like machinery.

Lord Cliffe was a bit of an autocrat in his own house, and the slightest deviation from the established rules met with so stern a reprimand that even the servants dared to risk a second from his lips. As a consequence, they dropped round that, in effect, her whole work consisted in transmitting Mrs. Belton's orders, for though the latter had given up her bundle of keys, she was by no means willing to relinquish one atom of her power.

Arline had a pretty little sitting-room to herself, where her meals were brought by a maid whose work it was to attend to her, and of course she was at liberty to go about the grounds as much and as often as she liked.

For some time, after her arrival she saw nothing of Hubert, who had gone to London on business for his uncle, but sometimes in an evening she would peer through the banisters to catch a glimpse of Lady de Roubaix, as she swept into the dining-room in her silks and laces, with jewels flashing about her, looking like that dark queen "brow-browed with burning gold," whose beauty took the world by storm over a thousand years ago! Arline was something of an artist, and had a sincere admiration for the beautiful in whatever shape it appeared; and it seemed to her impossible to imagine anything lovelier than this splendid young Countess, whose life was, apparently, one long, luxurious holiday.

More than anything else, she enjoyed her walks, the long, lonely rambles she took in the open country, either through the woods, or down to the seashore. One afternoon she went out rather earlier than usual, having scornfully thrown the tasks set her by Mrs. Belton, and feeling a delightful sense of liberty as she took her way through the park where the bracken had grown as high as her own head, and the deer were herding together under the branches of trees that had been planted hundreds of years ago, when merry England was yet swayed by the dominion of the knightly Plantagenets.

It was a lovely afternoon, too warm if anything, with a lavish bounty of golden sunshine

in the air playing on the leaves, and dappling the path with little tremulous shadow, as it pierced the thickly-woven canopy of the chestnut avenue. After leaving the park, Arline went straight on through fields where the corn stood up in emerald green walls on each side of the path, and as you looked through it a wonderful blaze of poppy scarlet met your eye—it was so pretty, too, when a faint breeze swept by, and ruffled the spear-pointed leaves, and sent tiny waves of silver shadow rippling across.

The sky was one grand expanse of deepest, clearest azure, and on high a lark soaring in the blue air seemed to be pouring out his very heart in a song of keenest ecstasy. The green earth, in her splendid summer robe of leaf and blossom, was at her faintest, and her influence woke answering chords in the heart of the young girl, who seemed to be the only living creature near.

"One can but be happy when one is young," said the world to so beautiful, "Arline murmured to herself, as she found her way into an unfrequented path through a wood that formed part of the Cliffe preserves. It was lonely enough now, filled with a subdued green light, and with no other sign of life than the lazy twitter of a bird, or the startled rush of a rabbit across her path into the thick undergrowth; but in a few months' time it would be echoing with the reports of guns, and the voices of apertures and keepers, for both Lord Cliffe and his nephew were ardent lovers of sport, and most careful in the preservation of game."

Arline had never been here before, but the novelty of exploring a fresh place constituted one of its greatest charms, and she kept on until she was stopped by a brook, or rather a river, for it was too wide to come within the province of the former. It seemed to run from one side of the wood to the other, and, as far as she could see, possessed no more convenient method of crossing than was afforded by some stepping stones, just above a mimic weir, where the water dashed and eddied round the boulders, and threw up little clouds of foamy spray, that looked wonderfully pretty in the dim, green light.

The young girl glanced round to make certain no one was in sight, and having quite reassured herself on this point, and come to the conclusion that she was safe, except for the bright black eyes of the squirrel curiously watching her from the branches, she proceeded to take off her shoes and stockings, and then, gathering her dress well up round her slim ankles, began stepping across the stones. She had nearly reached the middle of the stream, a feat only to be accomplished by springing—for the stones were set pretty wide apart—when one of them, which must have been unequally poised, gave way, and it was only by her alertness that she contrived to leap on to the next, instead of taking an impromptu bath. In doing so, she either strained or sprained her ankle, and also let fall one of her shoes, which was immediately carried down over the weir; and then, to make matters worse, she found that part of the stones had become submerged, and she was therefore in the middle of the river without means of getting on farther or for retreating—for the distance from the stone on which she stood to either of those on the side was too great for her to attempt.

Here was a dilemma, and one that threatened to be somewhat difficult to escape from. She had no stick or umbrella to aid her, and the fact of her utter isolation, on which only a few minutes ago she had been congratulating herself, now seemed a matter for very serious regret.

She looked round helplessly; the squirrel was still watching her, a few birds were twittering out their lazy satisfaction in the daylight of summer; but the abominable silence of the afternoon was otherwise undisturbed, and in this lonely spot it was very unlikely anyone would come to her assistance.

At any rate, she must try to make herself

heard, so without much hope of success, she called out as loudly as she was able.

There was no reply, and after a short interval she repeated her cry, and to her pleasurable surprise it was answered by a man's voice, and, a few seconds later, a young fellow of about six-and-twenty, with a fair sunburnt face and blue eyes, stood on the bank looking at her, in an astonishment that was rather amused.

"What's the matter?" he said, wondering who she could be; and perfectly conscious of the pretty picture she made with her bare white feet, and perplexed expression.

"Don't you see that I can't get across?" she exclaimed, half-laughing, and quite free from the embarrassments which, under other circumstances, she would certainly have felt.

"Which way do you want to go, this side or the other?" he asked, and Arline pointed to the bank she had just quitted, for an extension of her walk was now, of course, out of the question.

"All right, I'll see what can be done. Why on earth, if I may ask, did you choose such a method of crossing when there is a bridge a very little way farther down?"

"How did I know there was a bridge? You may be sure if I had been aware of it I should not have got myself in this fix," this was said somewhat petulantly.

Mr. Hubert Cliffe seemed in no hurry to bestir himself—an adventure of this kind was far from disagreeable, and, besides, the girl looked so very pretty that he was inclined to prolong the pleasure of looking at her.

"You are a stranger here, then?" he said. "Yes, I am, but I don't see that asking questions is the best way of helping me!" she replied, blushing a lovely rose-red under his gaze.

"Perhaps not, but I didn't know you had asked me to help you," he answered, mischievously. "Am I to understand such is the case?"

Arline knitted her delicate brows together in angry silence, and thought to herself that, in spite of his good looks, this must be a very disagreeable young man indeed.

"Silence gives consent, so I suppose you mean yes," he went on. "If you'll stay where you are—is not that a silly question, by the way, as it seems the reason you want me to help you is because you can't help yourself?"

"Very silly, indeed," this most emphatically.

"Well, I'll alter my sentence: If you'll be patient ten minutes, I'll be round by the bridge."

He was there in even less time, and sprang on the stone nearest to the one on which she stood.

"Give me your hands," he said holding out his own, and then jump. I'll see that you don't fall in the water."

"I can't jump!"

"Why not?"

"Because I have sprained my ankle."

"That alters the case entirely," he said, his smile changing to a more serious expression.

"I must carry you over."

"Oh! no," involuntarily.

"Well, I am entirely at your service, and if you can suggest any other method, I shall be only too delighted in helping you to put it into practice."

There was no other method, and Arline saw this at once, and regretted speaking as she had done, on the impulse of the moment; but, for all, that she was angry with her would-be rescuer; he seemed to treat the whole matter as a joke, whereas to her, it was beginning to assume much more serious dimensions.

"I suppose, after all, it will have to be as you say," she murmured, disconsolately.

"Not unless you like, you know," put in Hubert, with an air of profound respect.

"I wish you would not tease me! It is very ungenerous, considering I am not in a position to resent it!" she exclaimed, childishly, with big tears, partly the result of the pain she was suffering, and partly that of petulance.

undertaking; for so many years have elapsed since that wreck that I fear he might not be living, even if he succeeded in escaping at that time, which is also doubtful, as a captain is usually the last one to leave his vessel."

Miss McAllister certainly was not in a very encouraging mood to-day.

"Do you know what line the *White Star* belonged to?" her visitor asked, with a very downcast face.

"I do not know," was the reply. "You will have to go to some one who has a vessel register or directory—I should suppose almost every shipowner would have one—and you will doubtless find out there who was the owner of it, and, with that knowledge gained, it will be comparatively easy to learn who had been its captain."

(To be continued.)

WATCHES.—Edward VI. appears to have been the first Englishman to wear a watch, and this consisted of "one harm gilt, with two plumets of lead;" that is to say, it was driven by weights. This is supposed to have been received by the king as a present from Nuremberg, and was playfully called a Nuremberg animated egg. The word "watch" was derived from an Anglo-Saxon word, meaning to wake. The first portable timepiece of which we have any record was that of the Chinese pocket dial mounted upon the head of a cane or carried by a chain round the neck. Queen Elizabeth had a watch in shape like a duck, with chased feathers, the lower part of which opened, and the face or dial of silver ornamented with a gilt design. The outer case was of brass, and that in turn was covered with black leather ornamented with silver studs. Mary Queen of Scots gave a curious token of affection to her faithful maid-of-honour, Mary Seaton, in the shape of a watch in the form of a skull, the dial occupying the place of the palate and the works that of the brains. The hours were marked in Roman letters. A bell in the hollow of the skull received the works, and a hammer struck the hours.

FRUGAL LIVING.—The Paris correspondent of the *Lancet* writes:—"After a service of more than half a century as director of the Gobelins Manufactory, M. Chevreul, the illustrious chemist, has been placed on the retired list; and, although in less than two years he will have completed one hundred years of age, he considers that he has not been well treated. It would appear, however, that, in order to spare the feelings of the old gentleman, he has been allowed to retain his appointment, with the full salary attached to it. The Municipal Council of Paris has given his name to a new street in this city, an honour rarely conferred on persons while yet living. The following short account of his habits may be of some interest. He is generally lightly clad, and wears no hat, unless under circumstances in which he is obliged to appear in one. Indeed, he hardly needs a hat, as he has most luxuriant hair. He is constantly at work, allowing only ten minutes for each of his meals, of which he has but two a day. He breakfasts at seven, the repast consisting of a plate of meat and another of vegetables, which he eats together, the whole being washed down with two tumblers of water. He is said to have never drunk a glass of wine in his life. He dines at seven in the evening, and takes nothing between the two meals except a small loaf at noon, which he eats standing and by the side of his alembics. The writer who relates this states that, on a visit to M. Chevreul, he found him in the attitude just described; and, on expressing his surprise at the frugal manner in which he lived, M. Chevreul observed, 'I am very old (this was in 1874); and I have yet a great deal to do, so I do not wish to lose my time in eating.' This example of longevity is certainly a good argument in favour of temperance and regularity of living."

CLIFFE COURT.

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CHAPTER V.

The morning sunshine was coming in a flood of radiance through the square-paned windows of Lady Carlyon's sitting-room, glinting on pictures and vases and flowers, and making Arline Lester's head look like that of an aureoled saint; for those wonderfully tinted curls of hers, that seemed chestnut in the shadow, became bright gold when the light played amongst them.

She was sitting, at the table, with a pencil and note-book in her hand, and opposite Lady Carlyon, whose pale face and heavy eyes betokened a sleepless night.

"Would you imagine it possible! I have been here three weeks!" she exclaimed, suddenly.

"Have you, indeed? Time passes very quickly—or, perhaps, it is your presence that has made me fancy so."

"You put it very prettily," Arline said, smiling, and coming over to the couch to sit by her side. "I have been very happy with you, but I must really see about leaving soon."

"Why should you? I wish you would stay with me always."

Arline shook her head—this was impossible; for her proud spirit would never have submitted to a life of dependence while she had health and strength to work.

"I want to find something to do soon, but it seems rather difficult."

"I was speaking to Herbert Cliffe about you last night, and asking him if he knew of anything that would suit you."

"Well—and did he offer any suggestion?"

"None—except"—Arline smiled—"that you should go to Cliffe Court, as housekeeper."

"Did he mean it—seriously?"

"I don't know, but I should think not; you would surely not undertake such a post?"

"Why shouldn't I? One situation is as good as another, provided it is respectable," said Arline, stoutly; "and I have a decided domestic talent, so I've been told. What has become of their former housekeeper?"

"She is ill, and can't get about. Certainly, she is a very nice person, and superior to her position, being the widow of our old village doctor, who died very poor. Lord Cliffe invariably treats her with the greatest possible respect."

"As he would treat me if I went there," laughed the young girl. "Joking apart, Alicia, I don't think I could do better than apply for the vacant post—I should infinitely prefer it to governing."

Lady Carlyon meditated for a few minutes. Brought up in the conventionalities of society, it seemed to her that Arline would incur the risk of losing caste by taking upon herself the duties of a sort of upper-servant; but the girl was old enough to judge for herself, and she had no one else's feelings to consult.

"You must do as you think best, Lina," she said, at last; "I have no doubt you would find Cliffe a very comfortable home, and you would have nothing to do save give orders, and see they were obeyed."

"And you think Lord Cliffe would give me the situation?"

"There is not much fear but that he would if I asked him, and said you were a friend of mine."

"But that is just what I don't wish you to do!" exclaimed Arline eagerly. "I want to go entirely on my own merits—such as they are—and to exact only as much consideration as if I had been brought up with no other expectation than that of fulfilling my present capacity—do you understand?"

"I think I do, you very independent little person."

"And I am right, am I not?"

"Perhaps so—indeed, I think I may say you certainly are."

"I am glad you agree with me," Arline said, kissing her, "for independent as you call me, I am only a weak woman after all, and I like other people's opinions to coincide with my own. You see the case just resolves itself into this—I have to gain my own living, and there might be something incongruous in Lady Carlyon's friend in such a position as housekeeper at Cliffe, so if you simply introduce me as a person you know, and can recommend, it will be quite sufficient, and much better than saying we are old schoolfellows."

"Herbert Cliffe knows it already."

"But his uncle does not?"

"No—it is not probable he has heard anything at all about you."

"All the better. Shall I write to him, or seek a personal interview?"

"I will write for you, if you like; and manage it all, but I expect they will want you to go pretty soon, as Mrs. Belton is unable to attend to anything; and the fact of Lady De Roubair being there makes it more important that the ménage should go on smoothly."

"Who is Lady De Roubair?"

"Lord Cliffe's niece—his only sister's child."

"She does not live there always?"

"No, but from a few words she said last night I fancy she has no intention of leaving yet awhile. She is very beautiful, but I can't say I exactly like her. She looks haughty and imperious—the sort of woman who would let no scruple stand in the way of any purpose she might desire to accomplish."

"She won't trespass on my domain, or I on hers," said Arline gaily; "do I suppose we shall have no opportunity of falling out, and I must curb my naturally impetuous temper, and become very amiable and submissive to the powers that be. I wonder if I shall find the task a hard one?"

Lady Carlyon took Arline's pretty fingers in hers, and said rather sadly—

"It does not seem right that you should be debarré the pleasures and safety that girls of your age naturally expect. Your life ought to be so bright and happy."

"And so it will be!" Arline responded, quickly; "and any regrets I may once have had I have conquered, and I accept my lot with perfect content. I have made up my mind to be a model old maid, and show the world one does not require to be married in order to be happy."

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"After all, you won't have so much to do as after, for the servants are very good"—when Mrs. Belton was well the servants were the worst that ever lived, and gave her more trouble than all the rest in Christendom put together—"and if they are only managed properly, things work as smoothly as machinery. No doubt about that," disconsolately, "they won't come to be contented about by a young child like you."

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"I can't jump!"

"Why not?"

"Because I have sprained my ankle."

"That alters the case entirely," he said, his smile changing to a more serious expression, "I must carry you over."

"Oh! no," involuntarily.

"Well, I am entirely at your service, and if you can suggest any other method, I shall be only too delighted in helping you to put it into practice."

There was no other method, and Arline saw this at once, and regretted speaking as she had done, on the impulse of the moment; but, for all that, she was angry with her would-be rescuer; he seemed to treat the whole matter as a joke, whereas to her, it was beginning to assume much more serious dimensions.

"I suppose, after all, it will have to be as you say," she murmured, disconsolately.

"Not unless you like, you know," put in Hubert, with an air of profound respect.

"I wish you would not tease me! It is very ungenerous, considering I am not in a position to resent it!" she exclaimed, childishly, while big tears, partly the result of the pain she was suffering, and partly that of petulance



["DON'T YOU SEE THAT I CAN'T GET ACROSS," ARLINE EXCLAIMED, HALF LAUGHING.]

at his conduct, forced themselves from her eyes.

His manner changed instantly.

"I beg your pardon, I am very sorry, really sorry. Now, if you will get on the extreme edge of your stone I will try to find a footing on it too, and I think I can get you over all right."

She did as he bade her, and it was an easy enough task for him to lift her alight, lithe figure in his arms, and spring across, very little impeded by her weight.

He was not a stoic, the gentleman who fills the responsible position of hero in this veracious history, and perhaps it is not to be wondered at that a little thrill of pleasurable emotion ran through his veins as he put down his light burden, rather regretting the passage had been such a short one.

"Thank you," she said, as she reached terra firma. "I need not trouble you any longer."

"But your shoe, what have you done with it? You have only one."

"Oh, yes! I remember, it fell into the stream and went over the weir," she said, an expression of dismay stealing over her face.

"All right, I'll get it for you," he said, going away, and Arline took the opportunity of sitting down, and putting on her stockings and one shoe. Presently he returned with the other.

"I've fished it out with my stick. I suppose it is hardly a matter for surprise that it should be wet."

"I suppose not," she answered, regarding it ruefully. "But even if it were dry, I could not put it on, for my ankle is so swollen."

"And does it pain you?"

"Rather."

"Then I expect you won't be able to walk. Let me help you up, and you can try."

His surmise proved correct; she took a few steps, and then paused, unable to continue.

"Take my arm," he said, peremptorily, drawing her hand through; "and tell me

where you want to go, and I'll accompany you."

"But it's a long way off."

"All the more reason why you should not be permitted to struggle on alone."

"And probably you want to get home."

"I'll make my want subservient to yours. Have you any other objections to urge?"

"I don't like troubling you so much."

"Trouble does people good sometimes. I'll endeavour to learn a lesson by submitting to it with a good grace; but, first of all, you must tell me your home."

"Cliffe Court."

Hubert came to a sudden standstill and looked at her.

"Where?"

"Cliffe Court," repeated Arline, very much puzzled at the reception her news met with.

"You live there?"

"Certainly I do. Does it surprise you?"

"It does, rather."

"Perhaps," said the girl, beginning to laugh; "you think I'm too insignificant a personage to belong to such a grand place, but I assure you it is a fact, nevertheless."

She was feeling quite at home with him now; her little rebuke, and the way he took it, had given her a sort of superiority, which she contrived to maintain.

"You still look incredulous!" she added.

"Do I? Well, I must confess I am puzzled."

"Because you are wondering what position I occupy there?"

"Not so much that, as because I live there myself, and have never seen you," he answered.

It was Arline's turn to look surprised now.

"You—live—there—yourself?" she echoed, pausing between each word. "Then you must be Mr. Hubert Cliffe."

"That is my name; and you?"

"I am the new housekeeper, Arline Lester."

"Lady Carlyon's friend? Ah, I remember now; at first I was very much puzzled as to your identity."

They walked on through the cornfield in complete silence. Arline was very much taken aback at her discovery. She wondered whether she had been too free, not to say sharp, with Lord Cliffe's nephew, and whether in his own mind he was thinking her a young female who either did not know, or tried to ignore, her proper place.

Poor Arline! As a matter of fact, this situation of hers placed her in a false position, and, independent as she was, and often as she had declared there ought to be no distinction of class, she found the practice a very different thing from the theory, and was more than once tempted to turn back from the path she had chosen.

She grew rosier and rosier as she wondered what Hubert Cliffe thought of her, and lifting her eyes suddenly to see whether his face bore any indication of his feelings, found his gaze fixed on her with an intentness that bore unmistakable evidence of the fact of his being extremely interested, if nothing else.

"Don't you think you had better leave me now?" she said, rather confusedly.

"Why should I leave you?"

"Because we are getting within view of the Court windows."

Hubert glanced up carelessly.

"I don't think there is any necessity for my leaving you, but if you don't wish to be seen I can take you through the shrubbery, and let you into the house by my study window. I think that will be the better plan."

It was the one they adopted, and by its means Arline got indoors without being spied by inquisitive eyes, whose owners might not, perhaps, have looked with equanimity on the spectacle of Lord Cliffe's housekeeper leaning on the arm of Lord Cliffe's heir.

(To be continued.)



["SO, SIR, THIS IS THE WAY YOU KEEP YOUR PROMISES, IS IT?" CALLED A HARSH VOICE BEHIND THEM.]

NOVELLETTE.]

SYBIL'S MISTAKE.

CHAPTER IV.

HALF-PAST ONE was the luncheon hour at the Hall, and at that time Sir Roger presented himself in the drawing-room. On the way up he had had time to think over what he had to say to the Squire, and he flattered himself that he would be able to make out a good-enough case for himself.

In the drawing-room he found Mrs. Penshurst alone, who, after treating him to a detailed account of all the ailments of the whole village community, wound up by saying that Sybil had a headache, and would not be down to luncheon. Sir Roger was not sorry.

Luncheon passed off as such meals usually do, the Squire being particularly affable. He had, in fact, scored a point off his pet foe, Farmer Jackson, having fined him, or, rather, one of his carters, a sovereign for working a horse in an unfit state.

By the time luncheon was over, he was up to his neck in the Vagrancy Acts, which he was explaining to his guest, with the effect of nearly sending him to sleep.

The sermon had a happy result in one way—it drove the ladies out of the room, and left the two alone.

"Have another glass of sherry, Lane," said the Squire, as he passed the wine. "Where I think the present Acts are at fault is that they are—take care, you'll have those flowers over."

"I beg your pardon," said Roger; "the fact is, I was thinking about a very different matter relating to myself, and its probable consequences."

The tone in which he spoke stopped the flow of eloquence.

The Squire changed the subject.

"Nothing wrong, I hope?" he said. "I know young men will be imprudent, but—"

Sir Roger smiled. "I am not in want of money, Mr. Penshurst," he said; "that is all right. But I was going to ask you for something else which you can give me."

"What is it, my dear fellow? I shall be delighted, I am sure, to be of use to you in any way," and the Squire waved his hand in a patronizing way, as if Roger had only to ask, and the thing was done.

"I was going to ask you for your daughter's hand."

"My what?" almost roared the old man, as he spun round on his chair. "You must be off your head."

"I believe I am in my senses," said Roger, who was beginning to be afraid that he had made a mistake.

"You want my daughter?" again inquired the Squire, speaking slowly, as if he doubted that he had heard aright.

"I certainly said so."

"And what, my dear sir, ever put it into your head to entertain so preposterous an idea?"

"Why preposterous?" asked Roger. "I see nothing curious in the request. Miss Sybil is a young lady—"

"Why preposterous! Nothing extraordinary!" interrupted the Squire, with great heat. "The young man is clean out of his senses. Whatever encouraged you?"

"You did."

"I did? Because I pick you up in the village, and asked you here as a return civility to you for your helping my daughter home one day, you think you are at liberty to make love to the whole family? Who are you, sir? where do you come from? what are your prospects? You call yourself a captain, but anybody can do that."

"My family is as old as your own, Mr. Penshurst."

"Prove it. I can't find any Lanes in the

county families who will acknowledge you. Bless me, sir, we can count twenty descents in the Penshurst family, and never yet have any of our daughters made a *mésalliance*."

"I can only repeat that my position," said Sir Roger; "is such that nobody would be guilty of a *mésalliance* in marrying me."

"Very well," said the other; "let us begin at the beginning: where is your father?"

"My father is dead."

"Your mother, then?"

"My mother died when I was born."

"Your brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts?"

"I have not a relation in the world."

"Good gracious, and you, a nameless young man with no belongings, presume to aspire to the hand of my daughter Sybil. No, my good fellow, it's all absurd. I am sorry that you ever came here, but I was rather taken with you, and I never even dreamt of such an ending as this; anything in reason, but this is too much."

Sir Roger turned crimson; he felt that if the Squire went on much longer in this patronizing way he might lose his temper, blurt out his whole history, and turn the tables.

The thought of his former experience in search of a wife, however, restrained him, and he managed to ask,—

"Then I understand that you refuse to allow me to pay my addresses to Miss Penshurst?"

"Certainly. I need hardly say that, and I hope you will keep your own counsel. I have no wish to publish such a ridiculous story to the whole county. By-the-bye, I hope you have said nothing to my daughter."

"No. Under the circumstances, I considered your consent—I mean to say, I wished to discover your views with regard to your daughter first."

"Quite right. I must say, that though you have been very foolish, you have behaved honourably throughout this unlucky affair, and I am very sorry that it will put a stop to

your visits here. Well, good-bye," he added, holding out his hand. "You came from nowhere; take my advice and go back there, and when you think of marrying, choose somebody in your own rank of life."

But Roger was Sir Roger Vane again. "Good morning, Mr. Penhurst," he said, without offering to take the proffered hand. "You have been good enough to give me some advice this morning, permit me to do the same for you. The next time that you pick up a nameless stranger in your village and introduce him to your family, take care not to allow him to drop into habits of intimacy which you do not intend to encourage, and, above all, don't let him see too much of your daughter; and more than this, do not forget that there are other gentlemen in the world besides yourself. I wish you good-day."

And with this Sir Roger left the room, leaving Squire Penhurst with the feeling that he had not altogether come off best.

Sir Roger's speech, which would have been far too rude for anybody else but as self-impressed a gentleman as the Squire, had left its sting, and the idea that he had got the worst of the struggle presently gave way to a feeling of determination that Captain Lane must be got out of the county, and Sybil married as soon as possible to the first eligible suitor who might present himself.

Meanwhile, Sir Roger, having ordered his belongings in the hall, left the house on his return to the village. He could hardly help feeling the reverse of satisfied with his morning's work. Being very much in love with Sybil he had managed to annoy and quarrel with her father, and might as well return to Danchbury as stay in Haslington.

Having been forbidden the house he could never meet Sybil at home, and her father was sure to take steps to prevent their meeting elsewhere. Besides, he now saw, how, never having come to an understanding with the daughter, the father's prohibition entirely stopped his ever doing so.

Lost in reflection he was walking slowly along the path which led to the village, when about half-way in the centre of a small lawn placed in a beautiful copse he spied the flutter of a dress, and a second after was face to face with Sybil Penhurst.

He could not draw back, and he did not like to go forward: here was the interview which five minutes before he had so earnestly desired, and now he hesitated to accept it. One reason was that he felt he had no business to speak to her after what her father had said, and another the fear that she might be of the same mind as the Squire, and Roger felt he could not take two rebuffs in one day. However Sybil was the first to speak.

"Good evening, Captain Lane," she said. "You are leaving the Hall early to-day?"

"Yes, I have important business, but how are you, Miss Penhurst? They told me that you had a headache."

"They told you the truth," she said, with a smile. "But as I thought a walk would do me as much good as staying in the house I slipped out while you were all at luncheon. I feel much better now."

"I am glad to hear it, but now I must say good-bye, as I have to catch a train."

"Catch a train! You are coming back, surely?" gasped Sybil.

"I wish I was," he answered, sadly, letting his voice express more of his feelings than he intended.

"But why is that? You never said yesterday that you expected to have to go?"

"No, because I did not then know it."

"And you are really going?" cried poor Sybil. "What shall I—I mean what shall we do without you?"

"As you did before I came, I suppose," said Roger, stoutly.

"I am afraid not," she said, sadly—so sadly that Roger started. "Well, if you must go I am afraid it is our fault that you don't like Haslington. I never thought that anyone who had seen so much and mixed so much

with the outer world would care for our old-fashioned ways down here."

"No, no!" he said, eagerly, "it is not you who are driving me away."

The emphasis on the pronoun was so marked that Sybil blushed and looked down. Roger's good resolutions were gone in a minute.

"Does my going or stopping make any difference to you?" he asked.

Sybil gave him no answer, only a look. Then she placed her hand in his.

"My darling," he cried, passionately, as he strained her to his breast and covered her face with kisses, "can you really care for a rough fellow like me?"

And Sybil answered "Yes."

For a moment both were silent, then Roger spoke again.

"Sybil," he said, gravely, "I ought to have told you why I was leaving Haslington. I was going because your father had forbidden me his house, and he did so because I had asked him for your hand."

Sybil's face fell. She had been trained to implicit obedience to her father, and she spoke with a troubled voice.

"But he liked you so; he was always asking you to the house."

"Yes, liked me as an acquaintance—as a humble friend, but not as a suitor for his daughter."

"Oh, he did not mean it; he was vexed, surprised, perhaps, at your request. My mother will put it right, I am sure."

"Sybil, darling, it was not myself that he objected to—it was my birth. He said that our marriage would be a *révolte*."

"Your birth, Roger?" she said. "Why are you not a gentleman?"

"Yes, and of a family as good or better than your own."

"But did you not tell him so?"

"Yes, but he refused to believe me; he asked for proofs."

"And what proofs had you?"

"My word," said Roger, proudly. "A man does not carry an attested pedigree in his pocket."

"And he disbelieved you?"

"Yes, he doubted my word, and he is the first man who ever has."

He forgot the false position he was in. Sir Roger Vane's word might be beyond doubt, but he was acting the part of a nameless adventurer.

They were seated on the grass side by side. Any other man would perhaps have been satisfied with Sybil's simple confession of her love. But Roger required a further test.

"Sybil," he said, earnestly, "have you thought what all this means. You love me, and I you, but your father forbids our marriage; nay, even if he knew we were here he would, well—with a bitter laugh—" commit me as a vagrant. Nay, darling, do not cry—for Sybil's tears were beginning to flow—" or you will make me wish that I had carried my secret to India with me again, as I had intended to do till I met you just now."

"If you had," said Sybil, "you would have broken my heart. I could bear to be parted knowing you loved me, not scorned."

"But even now," said Sir Roger, "how are we to get off? We cannot marry. Your father will never consent."

"We can wait," said Sybil.

"Wait!" cried the other. "Yes, wait till I am a colonel, or your father died; and even then his pride would never yield."

"I never thought of that," she said.

Then Sir Roger resolved to play his great card to lose or win.

"Sybil," said he, "there is an alternative, a hard one I grant, but still possible. Can you bear to give up your home, your family, your friends to marry me, to follow me abroad? Can you bear to come to India to live the life of a soldier's wife, to be separated often from your husband or your children, to suffer the hardships of the climate, to be ordered hither and thither throughout the

length and breadth of the Provinces at the caprice of your superiors?—for, my darling, a soldier's wife has no lot apart from her husband. This and ten times more than this will be your fate if you marry me without your father's consent."

He paused, almost surprised himself at the hard picture which he had drawn, harder even than the reality.

"Then, again," he said, "you have been reared in luxury. How could you face the hardships of a poor man's wife's life? No"—as she was about to speak—"pause an instant before you decide for ever."

But Sybil without hesitation placed her hand in his, and said, looking at him with fearless blue eyes,—

"I can face all with you."

Sir Roger sprang to his feet, and paced the turf with too great agitation to speak. Then as she, too, rose he clasped her in his arms.

"My darling," he cried, "you shall never repent your choice."

Even his doubts were satisfied at last.

Very happy was the half-hour the two spent together talking over their plans for the future, settling what they would do and where they would go. Roger was half tempted to undecide his love, but he could not bear to do so yet. He was too happy in the thought that she had chosen him for his own sake, too glad to hope that in this new and pure love the hated tangle of his former engagement would sink far away.

They scarcely knew how long they talked as they walked through the fields, but as they reached the outskirts of the village the sun was fast sinking in the west. Then, as they passed to my good-bye, Sybil exclaimed,—

"Oh, Roger, in all our happiness we never thought that we are not married yet."

"No," he said, with a laugh, "and just at present we hardly know how to get married, do we?"

"What shall we do?" she asked.

"Do? Why run away in the orthodox style."

"Don't joke, dear," she answered, "about so serious a subject."

"No joking at all. You have promised to be my wife. It rests with me to find the means to make you so. Now listen, your father has forbidden me the house, and has asked me to leave the place. To stay here will be only to encourage him in needless annoyance to you. You must pretend that you have forgotten all about me. Meanwhile I will make my plans for carrying you off."

"But, Roger, I don't like running away."

"If you are going to be my wife, darling, you must promise to love, honour, and obey me. Won't you begin now?"

Sybil laughed; then her pretty face clouded as she said,—

"But shall I hear from you?"

"I will find a means," he said.

And with a long embrace the two parted.

CHAPTER V.

Misadventure they say never come singly. On the very day on which Sir Roger got his congé from the Squire, the red house in the village was occupied by the new tenants, who were no other than Colonel Hunter and his daughter. Mabel did not have to undergo the punishment which her father had promised her, for within a month of her marriage cholera appeared in the station, and her husband was one of the first victims.

Shortly afterwards Colonel Hunter took his pension, and they had returned to England together for good.

The Colonel had, after inquiry, fixed upon the house at Haslington, and even while Roger was pleading his own cause with the Squire, Mabel and her father had arrived at their new home.

As luck would have it, in the course of the afternoon Mrs. Foynt went out for a stroll round the garden, from whence she could get a good view of the fields leading to the Hall,

and, above all, of the lane down which the lovers, almost at the same time, came wandering arm-in-arm. At first she thought nothing of it, but suddenly she recognized Sir Roger.

Although she did not really care for him and never had, and although she was pretty certain that he would never forgive her, yet she could not altogether repress a pang of regret or jealousy at seeing him with another woman, whom, from his manner, she could not doubt he loved.

Sir Roger vanished after his loving embrace, never suspecting that he had been seen, but Mabel did not forget the circumstance.

She found out that he had been living under a false name, and also that he was gone without being the acknowledged lover of Sybil Penhurst (it did not take her long to discover who she was), and she determined to make the best, or rather the worst, use of her knowledge.

So when Mrs. Penhurst called, she took advantage of her father's having an attack of fever to return the call by herself, and, by pretending she was uncertain of the road, induced the Squire to escort her on her return journey.

By introducing the subject of Captain Lane she soon found that the Squire was ignorant of Roger's real name, and almost as easily discovered that he disliked the so-called Captain Lane.

Taking the chance thus offered, she at once acknowledged that she had met him, and hinted that she knew something about him which she did not care to reveal.

The fact was that she did not think Sir Roger's travelling about under an assumed name a very honourable act, especially when coupled with his conduct to Sybil.

Little suspecting that she herself was the cause of his doing so, she allowed herself to be awayed by the double motive of stopping his formally engaging himself, and of paying him out for his duplicity.

Of course, by giving the Squire a hint that all was not quite right with the mysterious Captain Lane, she doubly confirmed the old gentleman in the view he had taken.

Thus, within a fortnight of Sir Roger's asking for Sybil, the Squire, as he imagined, found out that he was a rogue, and his intercourse with the fascinating widow only tended by aly hints and innuendoes on Mabel's part, to confirm this view.

Indeed, there is no saying how far things might have gone had not the doctor ordered Colonel Hunter abroad as the only way of getting rid of the fever.

So a month passed, a very weary one for at least two people, if not for a third, for Jack Bramston was beginning to wish himself back in India or somewhere out of the way of his love-sick friend.

"Well, Roger," he said, one morning as they were seated at breakfast in London, "here's a move at last. I did not tell you before, because I was afraid of failing and adding to your misfortunes."

"What now?" asked Sir Roger. "If I don't succeed in getting some news from Asherton soon I shall go down there myself."

"And get caught by papa, perhaps run in as a vagrant, and generally make a fool of yourself."

"Well, Jack, you might sympathize with one a little."

"Sympathize, my dear fellow! I am positively running over with sympathy, and this letter is a proof of it."

"What have you got there?" asked the other.

"Why simply a letter, a very warm letter of introduction to old Penhurst from his wife's cousin, Mrs. Vernon. You know Hugh Vernon, don't you? Well he's a great chum of mine, and I happened to find out that he was a relation of theirs, and by telling him that I was going down there fishing I got this introduction to the Hall."

"My dear Jack, you are a good fellow," cried

his friend. "If you like you can be intimate there in a week at least, and then—"

"And then I'll have to do go-between, eh? Listen to all Miss Sybilla doubts and fears, and all your eager craving for news of what she had for dinner last night!" laughed his friend.

"No, old fellow, I shall only want you to pass letters backwards and forwards between us."

"In fact, do general postman. Well I'm all game," said Jack.

The month at the Hall had been far from pleasant for the unfortunate ladies. The Squire had told no one of his interview with Roger, not even his wife, and Sybil naturally kept her own counsel. Her father at first seemed to suspect her of knowing more than she cared to tell of the mysterious business which had spirited away "that charming Captain Lane," but by degrees his suspicions were lulled, and he merely devoted his leisure to hinting the advisability of young ladies not waiting to be old maids and the general blessedness of the married state, a course which greatly amused Bella, but rather frightened her sister. Nor did he stop there, for he introduced all sorts of heavy-headed young landowners from the neighbourhood, who, as a rule, were even more uncomfortable themselves than they made the two young ladies.

Such was the state of things at the Hall, when one morning Mrs. Penhurst, on opening her letters, gave a little cry of pleasure and said,—

"Listen John, here is news! My cousin Margaret Vernon writes to me that a Captain Bramston is coming here. She says that he is a most charming young man, a cousin of Lord Danbridge's, and a great friend of Hugh's."

"How nice!" said Mrs. Hastie. "The place has been so very dull since Captain Lane went away."

The Squire had swallowed a crumb the wrong way, and coughed very violently in consequence, while Sybil tried with indifferent success to look unconcerned.

"Margaret says that she has given him a letter of introduction to us, and that she hopes we will show him any attention that we can."

"Certainly, my dear, certainly," said her husband, inwardly consigning all bachelor captains to the uttermost parts. True, they knew something about this last one, but he was sure to run after the girls like the other.

To cut a long story short, Jack arrived, and took up his quarters at the little inn, nobody having seen him on the occasion of his former visit except Mrs. Prince; and as she never went out of the post-office, he had only, if he wished to avoid being recognised, to send for his stamps instead of paying them in person. However, after three days, when he went to present his letter of introduction, he was pressed by the Squire to take up his quarters at the Hall, and decided to do so.

He found it very hard to get an interview with Sybil alone, but at last he succeeded one morning, when the Squire had gone to a meeting of justices, in finding her alone in the garden.

"A lovely morning, Miss Penhurst!" he said. "Do you mind my smoking?"

"Not at all," she answered, for Roger smoked incessantly, and was not he all that was perfect? "I rather like it."

"I've got a commission to execute for a friend of mine," he continued, deeming it best to come to the point direct. "I promised to give you this," and he handed Roger's letter to her.

Sybil blushed as soon as she recognized her lover's handwriting, and with difficulty managed to say,—

"Do you know Captain Lane then?"

"Intimately. He belongs to my regiment."

"And you like him?"

"If I did not I should not be here," replied Jack. "Now, Miss Penhurst, please under-

stand that I know *everything*, down to the quarrel between your father and Roger. I shall be happy at any other time to talk to you about him, but at present I want an answer to that letter."

"You shall have it at once."

"Very good," and making some excuse he strolled away.

Sybil read through the letter again and again.

The greater part of it was devoted to the usual endearments which pass between young people in love, but there was one part which was of more importance, viz., a proposal to elope.

Clearly as she loved him the poor girl could hardly make up her mind to such a course. To give up the house in which she had been born and lived all her life, to become an outcast from her family, above all, to disobey her father, who, after all, was a kind parent to his children, seemed terrible.

Roger's account of himself was not very reassuring, and she knew so little of him.

She could not decide what answer to give, and was still hesitating, when she heard her father calling to her to come into his study.

She crushed the letter into its envelope, and placing it into the bosom of her dress returned to the house.

On reaching her father's study she found him standing by the window looking thoughtfully into the garden. On hearing her enter he turned round, and, with an uneasy smile on his face, said in a voice rather lacking in confidence,—

"Sybil, my dear, I have called you in because I wish to have a serious conversation with you about your future. You know Sydney Smythies?"

Sybil did know him. He was the baseliest of the young men whose visits her father had been encouraging during the last two months.

"Yes," she answered in a low voice.

"He has made me an offer to-day of which any girl in your position might well be proud. He has asked me for your hand."

"He wants to marry me!" murmured Sybil.

"Yes," said her father, affecting not to notice her confusion, "and it is a splendid thing for you. One of the oldest families in the county, and affluence. Upon my word," he continued, waxing enthusiastic, "I don't know a young man I would rather have for a son-in-law."

"Isn't Mr. Smythies a little—"

"Good gracious, you don't mean to say that you are not pleased, Sybil? Why I am sure he paid you enough attention when he was here, and he is a most gentlemanly young fellow—a most suitable husband for you."

Sybil thought of the elegant Sydney's many feeble attempts at gallantry, and, in spite of her great distress, could not restrain a smile. Her father took this as a sign that she was giving way; and overjoyed to find her so accommodating to his wishes when he most expected resistance—for he had not forgotten a certain Captain Lane—said, cheerily,—

"Well, then it is all right, Sybil? The fact is, I did not tell you, but I brought him back with me. He is in the next room, and I will send him here at once," and before Sybil could utter a word he had left the room, and a minute or two later Mr. Sydney Smythies took his place.

The truth was that this was a needy young gentleman of good family but extravagant habits, who having run through one fortune was anxious to repair his bad luck, as he called it, by a good marriage.

By dint of hints the Squire had so worked upon his young friend that the latter finally, as he expressed it, "a pretty girl with lots of money thrown at his head, had screwed up his courage, and asked the Squire's consent to his paying his addresses to Sybil."

Squire Penhurst, delighted to find any one willing to take Sybil off his hands at the shortest possible notice, had readily agreed to

his proposal, and hence his arrival at this juncture.

The eager lover was a pale-faced, heavy-looking youth of about five-and-twenty, with a narrow forehead covered with curls of coarse, dull brown hair, a hooked nose and thin lips. He made his entry awkwardly enough.

"Good morning, Miss Penhurst," he said, with a blush.

"Good morning," answered Sybil, trying to compose herself.

"I have just been talking to your father about you," he said, trying to throw a little passion into his voice, and failing dimly, "and now I am going to—"

"Stop!" cried Sybil, so firmly that he did pause half way through his lame proposal. "Let us have no misunderstanding. I cannot say what my father has told you, but if he has led you to expect that I am of one mind with him, I am afraid he is wrong. He left me before I had time to explain to him what I meant."

"Oh, but, hang it, you know," stammered the crestfallen lover, "he said that you were—"

"Going to refuse to discuss the question, once for all, with you, Mr. Smythies."

"But you might give me a chance, Miss Sybil!" he said. "I am sure I would try."

"Never mind what you would try. I can only repeat, as you cannot or will not understand me, that under no circumstances can I ever like you, and your refusing to go away now only increases my dislike."

"But," he said, endeavouring to detain her, "give me a chance."

"Never!" she cried. "If I were a man, or if I had a brother here you would not dare to treat me so," and with flaming cheeks she left the room.

"What a little fury," said Mr. Sydney Smythies to himself. "By Jove, I am well out of that, after all."

Meanwhile Sybil ran back to her room and scribbled a few hasty lines. She had hardly time to reach the garden before Jack Bramston strolled up again. He seated himself beside her on the grass, and said,—

"Have you found time to answer Roger's letter?"

"Yes," she said, with a blush, and she gave it to him.

"Thanks," said he, as he coolly pocketed it. "It will relieve poor old Jerry's mind a good deal. If I am not asking too much would you mind telling me what the purport of your answer is?"

Then Sybil, glad to have a sympathizing friend, even though so strange a confidant for a young girl, told him the history of the morning's doings.

Jack heard it patiently to the end, and then springing to his feet threw his hat in the air, caught it again, vaulted over the gate, and was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

With the arrival of Sybil's letter the last of Roger's doubts vanished. He at once paid a visit to his solicitors, and rather astonished them by his eagerness to get his marriage settlements drawn up with the least possible delay. He also impressed upon them the necessity of secrecy, though without telling them his reasons, and in the course of a few days, having made all his arrangements, he travelled to Hasberton.

Sybil's firm rejection of her father's proposal had not improved matters at the Hall, and a few days convinced Jack Bramston that he was the fifth wheel in the coach, as his presence in the house was very awkward both for himself and for the members of the family.

He therefore made excuses and retired to the village and Mrs. Prince's lodgings, where he found that she had quite forgotten his former visit.

He did not like to leave the place altogether,

as, in addition to his own reasons for wishing to stay, he felt that if he left just at this juncture his friend's affairs would be in a very bad way indeed.

The truth was that the time he had spent at the Hall had given him an opportunity of seeing a good deal of Bella Penhurst, and as he was not preoccupied with her sister, he soon found out that she was a very charming girl.

On the other hand, Bella liked him very well indeed; and, without knowing it, the two were very much drawn together.

As soon as Jack was out of the house the Squire set to work to bring his daughter to reason, and the more she showed her unwillingness to obey his wishes the more determined he became that she should do so; and he also, without, however, taking them into his confidence, persuaded his wife and sister to aid him in trying to make his daughter fall in with his will.

He was also beginning to get suspicious of Jack, but when the latter left the house civility had obliged him to offer him as much fishing as he liked, and he could not afterwards withdraw.

Such was the state of things when Sir Roger arrived in Hasberton. He soon found his friend, and the two spent an evening exchanging confidences.

Jack promised to let his own affair stand over till his friend's was settled, and also to manage an interview between the lovers.

In pursuance of this promise he made the best of his way next day to the Hall, where he luckily found Sybil taking an airing on the terrace. The poor girl looked pale and unwell. As he walked towards her, however, she brightened up at once, as she rightly looked upon him as her only friend, for she had been afraid to take even Bella into her confidence.

"Good evening, Miss Sybil!" he said. "I have some news for you. Roger arrived here last night after I left you."

"Roger in Hasberton!" she answered, in great excitement. "Are you really telling me the truth, Captain Bramston?"

"Certainly," said Jack, "and, what is more, he says he must see you to-day."

"Oh, yes, I must see him, but how?"

"I've arranged that," said the other. "He will be in the copse in half-an-hour's time. Suppose we say that we're going fishing? Miss Bella will come too, and if you are too tired to go further than the copse, why it is not to be supposed that we are going to lose our fishing for so small a reason."

"Oh, that will do capitally," said Sybil, delighted. "I will call Bella at once."

Miss Bella did not raise any objection to the arrangement; she only thought that Sybil was *de trop*.

The Squire saw them start, but thinking that there was safety in numbers he raised no objection.

As they neared the copse Sybil pleaded fatigue as an excuse for going no further. Jack expressed great concern, but Bella said that as Sybil was still not very strong she had better go back. So it was all comfortably arranged.

The two disappeared in great spirits, and Sybil walked slowly to the copse. She had hardly reached the little lawn when the sound of quick footsteps came down the path, and in a moment she was in her lover's arms.

The pair had much to tell each other of their mutual sufferings since they last parted. Sybil was no longer inclined to object to an elopement, and it was soon arranged that all the details were to be communicated by Jack Bramston as soon as they could be arranged.

They had settled all this, and as the evening was drawing on had reluctantly agreed that it was time to part, when, just as they were locked in each other's arms in a farewell embrace, a harsh voice, tremulous with passion, called from behind them,—

"So, sir, this is the way that you keep your promises, is it?"

At the first sound Roger gave a start, and Sybil nearly fainted.

There in the twilight stood the Squire, whose approach, in their preoccupation with each other, they had failed to notice. As both were silent, he continued,—

"And this, Sybil, is perhaps the reason why you refuse so steadily to obey my wishes. Go home at once; and you, sir, consider yourself fortunate that nothing but my wish to conceal my daughter's misconduct prevents my having you taken up as a rogue and a vagabond. You scoundrel, how dare you come here? You are a liar, sir!" he cried, grinding his teeth. "You told me that you had never spoken to my daughter, and that you would leave the place, and here I find you with her in your arms, as if I had never put any prohibition on you. What do you mean by coming here and stealing my daughter, another man's promised wife?"

He raised his stick as if to strike him. Sybil, with a little scream, threw herself between them, but Roger keeping his temper, answered quietly,—

"Don't be afraid, Sybil, we are not going to hurt each other. I am afraid, Mr. Penhurst, from your manner that you are hardly master of yourself, or likely to listen to the explanation which I have to offer."

Sir Roger was determined not to put himself in the wrong, and was controlling himself by a great effort.

But the other was not likely to listen to reason.

"Explanation!" he roared, "your actions have made everything as plain as daylight. Sybil, choose between that man and me."

But Sybil, who was standing with her lover's arm clasped round her waist, made no effort to move.

Her father stood aghast, but Roger had resolved on one more effort.

"Courage, my darling," he whispered. "Do as I tell you, and all will come right." Then he added aloud,—

"Sybil hardly knows what she is doing, Mr. Penhurst, or I am sure she would be ready to obey you. I asked you for her once before, and though you refused me I will ask you again."

"And I, sir, refuse you with ten times more reason than before. I will never give my consent while I live. Come, Sybil, you at least, shall not suffer by this. And you," to Roger, "do not practise on that weak girl's feelings. You know which way her interest lies. Do not seek to stop her."

While he was speaking a thousand schemes rushed through Roger's brain. He did not, above all things, wish to appear to draw Sybil away, and his plans were hardly ready yet.

"Good-bye, darling," he said, kissing her. "You must go with your father now."

The Squire, as she obeyed slowly, told her to go home, and the two were left alone.

"I wish to tell you," said Vane, "that an accidental meeting after but not before I saw you revealed to me the state of your daughter's feelings. I thought that her happiness lay in mine, and as you had shut the only straight path to our meeting we have been forced to do things by stealth. I may tell you, however, that this is the first time we have met since that day."

"Although I don't believe that," said the Squire, "I can tell you that it will be the last."

"That," said Roger, quite unmoved, "remains to be seen. The violence with which you have treated me has, I consider, quite absolved me from any obligations I owe you as the father of the lady I propose to marry. It is war to the knife."

"I'm glad to hear it," said the other; "I shall know how to act. And now leave this place."

"Good-bye, Mr. Penhurst," said Roger, coolly. "My great regret in marrying Sybil is—"

"You shall never marry Sybil, if I kill her first!" cried the other, fairly beside himself.

"Then *au revoir*," replied Sir Roger, and touching his hat he left the spot, leaving the Squire to recover by himself.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR ROGER had great reason to regret his decision in giving Sybil back to her father.

The latter set to work in earnest to make a marriage with her impossible.

Roger of course disappeared from Hasherton, leaving Jack, who so far had escaped detection, to watch events.

Bramston's daily budget of events was not encouraging. He described Sybil's condition as pitiable beyond description.

From the day that he discovered that his daughter loved Lane the Squire set to work to force her to marry the man whom he had chosen. To aid him in this he had engaged the assistance of the whole family. The result was that the unfortunate girl, who was by her father's orders confined to the house, taking her exercise under his immediate supervision, was unable, in spite of all Jack's ingenuity, to hear from her lover, and at last broke down, and consented to write to Sir Roger, telling him that she had changed her mind, and was engaged to be married to Mr. Sydney Smythies.

The arrival of this letter nearly sent Roger out of his mind. However, he did the best thing he could, and took the first train to Hasherton, where he found Jack Bramston nearly as disconsolate as himself.

"A nice state of things, Jerry," he said. "It's a whole week since I have seen Bella. They are all as close as possible up at the Hall, but I hear about this wedding coming off. It's on Tuesday, so if you want to stop it you've only got five days. From all I hear Sybil does not know what she is doing, and Smythies is one of the biggest rascals in England. Run through one fortune, and calculated to lead any unfortunate girl he marries an awful life."

"And for this fellow she has thrown me over?" said Roger.

"Come now, that's hardly fair. Remember, in the first place, the position that you have put her in by your masquerading, and, besides, don't you see she has been forced to do it?"

"Do you really think so?" said poor Sir Roger, catching at a straw of hope. The whole of his doubts had been reawakened by that unlucky letter.

"Not got a doubt of it myself. Now listen, Jerry, deeds not words must be our motto, so here goes."

He seated himself at a table, and wrote on a slip of paper:—"Meet me to-morrow at seven in the morning by the lower pool, at all costs," and then he signed the note, put it in an envelope, which he addressed to Bella Penahurst. Then he strolled down to the village inn.

He had made the most of his time in Hasherton, and was pretty well aware of the habits and also the love affairs of the natives. He soon discovered the object of his search, the landlord's son, and called him outside.

"Is Mary coming down to the village to-night?" he asked.

Mary was Miss Penahurst's maid, and Tom, who was keeping company with her, first looked sheepish, and then said "he believed she was."

Jack produced his note and a sovereign.

"If this note reaches Miss Penahurst you'll get five more of these to-morrow," he said.

Tom grinned a grin of would-be intelligence, and then pocketed them both.

"Mind," said Jack, "no one must know of it but Mary and yourself."

The next morning he was first at the rendezvous. He had not, however, long to wait. As Bella came near him she blushed very much, though she tried to carry it off by a laugh.

"Is this genuine, Captain Bramston?" she

asked, holding out her hand. "I was half inclined to think that it was all a hoax."

But Jack was serious.

"I am afraid, Miss Bella," he said, "that I have taken a great liberty in asking you to meet me here, but I hope you will forgive me when you learn the cause."

"He is going to propose," thought Bella.

"Can you keep a secret?" asked the other.

"Of course I can," she answered.

"Then here goes," cried Jack, and then and there he told the whole story, only suppressing Roger's real name.

Bella looked very grave.

"Poor Sybil," she said, "why did she not tell me. You must know that this is the first of the whole story that I have heard. I know one thing for certain, and it has given me great trouble. She positively detests Mr. Smythies."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Jack.

"Certain. This letter you speak of must have been wrung from her almost by force."

"And is she really going to marry him?"

"Yes, my father insists upon it," said Bella.

"Then all I've got to say is, we must prevent it."

"We?"

"Yes, you and I."

"But how?"

"In a very simple way. We must help Miss Sybil to run away."

"But," said the other, very earnestly, "can you tell me, upon your honour, that Captain Lane is a proper person for my sister to marry?"

"Captain Lane is a gentleman, a distinguished officer, and from what I know of himself and his family is fit to be the husband of any woman in England."

"Then why does my father object to him so much?"

"Your father is an old——. I mean to say your father is very hasty at jumping at conclusions. But now for our plans. Firstly, you must cheer your sister up. Secondly, you must help her to escape. Thirdly, you must keep it all a profound secret."

"You have no idea how closely Sybil is watched," said Bella.

"Good. What is the nearest point to your house on the main road?"

"The west lodge."

"That won't do," said Jack, thoughtfully.

"By-the-by, though, Jackson's farm is only a quarter of a mile from the Hall, and there is a good road up to that. We can cross the river in the punt. So far so good. On Monday evening you must smuggle your sister out of the house. I will meet you in the garden, and see you across the river. There we will have a carriage waiting, and they can catch the mail from Plymouth at Devon. Before your father finds out that they are gone they will be in London, and before he can follow they will be married."

"Well, I will try, but I must get back, as my father will miss me. Good-bye."

Jack felt much inclined to do a little business on his own account, but consideration for his friend restrained him.

Monday was the night before the wedding, and the bridegroom elect, attended by his best man, had both been dining with the family at the Hall. It was to be a very quiet wedding, the reason alleged being Sybil's health. Having seen them out of the house the Squire proceeded upstairs to his own room, delighted in the idea that his wishes were at last in a fair way to accomplishment. He noticed a light in Bella's room, but thought nothing of it, and passing on was soon fast asleep.

As the clock struck twelve, midnight, Bella's door opened, and she came out fully dressed for outdoor exercise. Stealing softly down the passage she reached her sister's room, and opened the door. Sybil came out at once, fully dressed like her sister, and looking better than she had for weeks past. The two sisters were clasped in each other's arms for a moment, and then began stealthily to descend the stairs.

Passing across the Hall they entered the kitchen premises, where they found Mary waiting, ready to close the door behind them.

"Good-bye, Mary," said Sybil.

"Good-bye, Miss Sybil, and God bless you. I hope you'll be happy," and Sybil passed outside the door of her house, which she might possibly never re-enter.

In the garden they found Jack waiting.

"Come along," he said, "we've no time to lose, and giving each an arm he led the way across the lawn. As they got close to the river the moon rose, and they could distinguish two figures in the boat. As they reached the bank one of them sprang ashore and clasped Sybil in his arms.

"Mine at last and for ever, darling!" he said. "Do you still intend to take me?"

But Sybil's only answer was to nestle closer to him.

"Come along, Jack," called his friend from the boat.

But Jack lingered.

"Safe at last," he said to Bella, as the lover's rushed into each other's arms.

"Yes, they are safe enough; but what is to become of me?" she answered. "I have got to meet my father to-morrow."

"You need not, unless you want to," said Jack. "Come along with us. Yes, Bella, I am a plain fellow, and I know I don't deserve such luck, but I think you care a little for me, and I care a great deal for you."

"What do you mean?" she asked in surprise.

"Why I vote we join them. We can all be married together."

"Are you coming, Jack? We shall miss the train!" called Roger from the boat.

"Coming," was the answer, as Jack caught up Bella in his arms and carried her towards the bank.

"What, both of you?" said Roger.

"Yes, both of us. Eh, Bella?"

And Bella made only little "yes" answer several questions.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE four lovers hastened to the farmhouse, and at once entered the carriage which was in waiting, and drove off.

The station was reached in time, and the train in due course deposited them at Paddington.

Roger made the best of his way to a private hotel near Regent's-park, where he was evidently expected.

Handing over the two girls to the care of the landlady, and recommending them to take some rest, he and his friend, after a hasty breakfast, hurried off to Doctors'-commons to get the licence for Jack's marriage.

"This is a nice game of yours, Master Jack," said Roger, as they were driving back to the hotel. "Whatever put it into your head to follow my example?"

"Why, you see," said his friend, "after the specimen which we have had of the old gentleman's way of conducting business one might expect anything, and as I was pretty certain he would find out my share in the business I was afraid I might be put under the same ban as yourself."

"Well, it's done now, so there is an end of it, and the only thing is to get married as soon as possible."

It was a funny wedding, with only the landlady of the hotel and the pew-opener to witness it.

The four runaways were all dressed in their travelling costume, and the clergyman was a very young curate, who, taking this for an ordinary wedding, was very much surprised at the handsome fee which he received.

There was also a curious incident in the vestry after the ceremony was over. Roger wrote his name first.

"Why, Roger," said his bride, "what a funny way you have written your name? It looks a good deal more like Vane than Lane."

"Only my bad writing," said Roger, coolly.

Captain Bramston made a great fuss here over signing his name, in order to create a diversion.

In spite of the writer's denial, when he came to look at it again after they had all left the young clergyman said to himself that it was a great deal more like Vane than Lane; he even referred it to the pew-opener, but the latter, in consideration of his having acted the happy father to both brides, had received such a gratuity as he never remembered to have got before, and, in consequence, he was quite incapable of giving any opinion at all.

The two couples started in the afternoon in the orthodox way for Paris. The evening mail-train put them beyond the reach of parents, as the morning's work had made such a pursuit useless.

The first week spent in Paris was a continued round of gaiety. The morning's shopping, the afternoons and evenings sight-seeing made the time pass almost too quickly.

In a few days the ladies had made good the deficiencies caused in their wardrobes by their hasty flight from home, and by the end of the week these young matrons felt that, after all, the married state was all that their father had tried to make them believe.

Six months passed, till Jack Bramston one day announced that he thought it was about time to go home, and introduce his bride to his mother and sisters.

Sir Roger, who had no belongings, and who was enjoying himself thoroughly, had no wish to leave Paris, and Sybil only wished to do what he liked. So it was decided that the couples should separate after a few days.

Few days, however, brought about a strange change in Bella, who, so far from continuing her former cordial manner to Sybil's husband, began to avoid his society, while an increased affection towards Sybil seemed to spring up at the same time.

At last, on the very day on which she was to leave for England, she took advantage of finding Sybil alone to broach the subject next her heart.

"Sybil, dear," she said, very gravely, "I have something very important to tell you."

"What is the matter?" asked Sybil, alarmed by her sister's serious air.

"Do you remember anything particular happening in the church when we were married?"

"No, certainly not."

"Not in the registry, when your husband signed his name?"

"You mean my saying it looked a great deal more like Vane than Lane. Yes. What about it?"

"Merely that the name was Vane, and not Lane."

Sybil turned pale and sank upon the sofa. Her sister rushed to her, but she motioned her away.

"What proof have you of this?" she asked.

Bella pulled out of her pocket a handkerchief, which, by its peculiar border, Sybil at once saw to be Roger's. She gave it to her sister, and there in the corner was written "Roger Vane."

For a short time both were silent. Then Sybil cried—

"Oh, Bella! what does this mean?"

"Simply that your husband is not living under his right name."

For a couple of hours the two talked it over with every possible conjecture as to what it could mean; and then Bella, with many tears and preparations, left her sister to complete her own preparations for the journey.

Left to herself poor Sybil felt as if her heart would break. There was no doubt about it now. Roger had done something to prevent his wishing to appear in his own name, and she was the victim. Why had he not trusted her? she asked. She could not believe in his being really bad, but still, why should he need this concealment? One thing she was deter-

mined, and that was to conceal her knowledge of the secret, and continue loving him till he proved himself unworthy of the trust.

Roger, ignorant, of course, of the reason, was horror-stricken to find the change. She looked wretchedly ill, and he in vain tried to learn a reason. At last he put it down to her grief at her sister's departure.

Things were in this state when, about a week after the Bramstons' departure, Roger and his wife strolled out to allow the latter to look at the shops. Something in one of them caught Sybil's eye, and while she was examining it she became aware that her husband had met a friend.

"Why, Jerry," he was saying, "you're about the last man I should have expected to meet here!"

"And where do you spring from yourself?" asked Sir Roger.

"Oh, luck now, as usual. Got leave last month, took the first ship, and here I am. All the fellows in the regiment were betting two to one that you never came out, and that if you did, you would be married!"

"And they would have won the last!" said his friend.

"What, do you mean to say so?" cried the stranger. "That comes of being a great man! Must marry for the sake of the family. When is it to come off? By-the-way, where is Jack Bramston?"

"He was here a few days since; we came over together."

"I might have known that," was the rejoinder. "Well, so you're going to be married?"

"I never said I was going to be married!" said Sir Roger, with a smile.

"What, never married already? What a quick fellow you are. I never heard anything about it. Never mind; I must run over to England for a couple of days, but when I get back I'll come and call. Your wife will be glad to meet an old friend of yours, that is, if she is fit to be your wife," he added, so affectionately that Sybil noticed the tone.

"Perhaps you have met before?" said Sir Roger.

His friend's face fell at once.

"You don't mean to say that she has caught you?" he cried. "Your fellows all said she would; but still, so soon after her husband's death?"

"Gerald, you're talking nonsense! Who do you think I have married?" asked Sir Roger.

"Mabel Poyntz, of course!"

"And where's Poyntz?" asked Sir Roger, in so calm a tone that his friend saw he had made a mistake.

"Died of cholera a month after they were married. Mrs. Poyntz and old Hunter, who came into his off- reckonings directly after, came home at once."

"You don't say so?"

"Quite true, I assure you. Well, good-bye, Jerry! I've got an appointment," and the stranger was gone.

Sybil, anxious to get a clue, did not show much concern about the stranger. At the same time, she had overheard enough of the conversation to confirm her worst suspicions, and all the jealousy of her nature had been roused by the mention of Mabel Poyntz's name, for she remembered having seen her, and her wonderful beauty gave a colouring to the wildest theories.

She returned to the hotel, feeling that a man who could live under an assumed name was fully capable of concealing his feelings under a mask of love. But why had he married her?

CHAPTER IX.

SHORTLY after the Bramstons left Paris it chanced one morning that Sir Roger, returning from his walk, entered the public salon of the hotel, intending to read the papers. The only other occupant of the room was a lady in deep mourning.

Just as he was seating himself, a faint exclamation of surprise caused him to look towards her; and, at a glance, he recognised his former fiancée, Mabel Poyntz.

She was the first of the two to break the silence.

"How do you do, Sir Roger?" she said, with a forced smile, "or ought I to call you Captain Lane?"

Roger stared at her; then realizing that she must have got his new name from the hotel register, he replied—

"I am known here as Captain Lane, Mrs. Poyntz, but you can call me whichever you like."

"Still under a false name!" she said, half to herself. "I thought that you would have left that at Highbury."

"Highbury," repeated Sir Roger, surprised to find his movements so well known. "How do you know Highbury?"

"My father has taken a house there, and I spent three weeks with him a short time since."

"Oh!" said Roger, rather relieved.

"Yes, and was glad to find you so well engaged," she went on, half regretfully, half mockingly, "making up for other people's shortcomings with a new love."

"Upon my word, she talks as if Poyntz had never existed, and jilting a man was an everyday occurrence with her," thought Sir Roger.

"Ah! Roger," she continued, treating him to the full power of her beautiful eyes. "I know that I don't deserve your pity, but still in my place, you know—"

"I am sure I pity you very heartily, Mrs. Poyntz," said Sir Roger. "I was very grieved to hear of your husband's death."

Mabel bit her lip. She had, in reality, cared very little more for Poyntz than for Sir Roger, and had merely made love to him from caprice, because she enjoyed anything which savoured of deceit. At the present time she was actually calculating the chance of being able to explain her former conduct, and bring Sir Roger, whom she knew to have loved her passionately, to her feet again.

"Poor Gerald!" she said; "only think what a sudden death. Ah, well, I must not complain. I threw away a great happiness for his sake, and yet he was taken from me at once."

As she said this she applied her handkerchief to her eyes, and then looked tenderly at Sir Roger.

This glance, which a year before would have brought him to her feet, had no effect whatever on the Baronet; his only wish was to put an end to the interview.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Poyntz," he said. "I have some letters to write, and as I have promised to take my wife for a drive this—"

"Your wife?" exclaimed Mabel.

"Yes, my wife," was the answer; "Sybil Penshurst."

For a second Mabel's face clouded over. However, now that he was beyond her reach she did not wish to appear jealous, so she said—

"Why, I understood that Mr. Penshurst had forbidden you the house?"

"Yes, he did; but I was not going to be stopped by that; we eloped."

"How romantic!" she said, with a slight sneer.

"And that was not all; for Jack Bramston ran off with Bella, the other sister."

This was too much for Mabel's gravity; and, forgetting her own disappointed hopes, she laughed outright.

"Well, Roger," she said; "I am glad that she has got so good a husband; but, at all events, she will not make a very haughty Lady Vane."

"At all events, she will be an honest one," said Roger, who did not relish her laughing at his wife.

"Wait till you have seen a little more of her," answered the other. "People change after marriage."

Then it flashed across Sir Roger's mind that Sybil had already changed; he did not, however, say so.

"Well, Sir Roger," said Mabel, holding out her hand; "we can, at all events, for the future be friends!"

"Willingly," said Sir Roger. As he spoke the rustle of a dress behind them made him turn.

There stood Sybil, staring at Roger with dismay in her sad eyes.

"Sybil, my dear, let me introduce an old friend, Mrs. Poyntz," said Roger.

Sybil bowed stiffly. "Are you coming out, Roger?" she asked.

"At once," he answered; and saying good-bye to Mabel, he followed her to their own sitting-room.

"Roger," she said, as he closed the door; "who is Mrs. Poyntz?"

"An old friend of mine," he answered.

"An old friend and a very dear friend, if what I heard yesterday is correct. I can bear this no longer," she cried, bursting into tears. "You married me under a false name—(Roger started)—you cannot deny it, and now I find you on the most intimate terms with that woman. Until you can and will explain these things I will not speak to you again."

And before he could prevent her she ran to her own room, shut herself in, and locked the door.

Sir Roger tried in vain to open it, nor could he get her to answer. Fairly at his wife's end, he at last determined to try one last expedient; he went to Mabel Poyntz's rooms and sending in his card, asked for an interview. This was granted.

"Well, Sir Roger," she asked, as she noticed his excitement; "is anything wrong?"

"Everything," was the answer. "Mabel, you once did me a great wrong, you can now repair it."

"How?" she asked.

"Do me a kindness which I can never repay all my life. Sybil has found out that Lane is not my real name, and she has heard or suspected that you and I were once something more than friends. She has looked herself in her own room, and refuses to see me. Will you go to her, and tell her the truth?"

At first the other hesitated. "She may refuse to see me, also," she said.

"You can, at all events, try."

"Very well, I will."

Left to himself, Sir Roger paced the room in the wildest impatience. It was fully an hour before Mrs. Poyntz returned.

"You can go to her now," was all she said.

An instant afterwards Sybil was in his arms, sobbing as if her heart would break, and begging his forgiveness for having doubted him.

"Oh, Roger," she said, "will you ever forgive me?"

"It was all my fault," he answered. "I did not tell you the truth; I was afraid to."

"Why, Roger?"

Then Sir Roger told her all his past history, and kept back nothing except his soldiering, which he did not care to brag about.

"And you once loved Mrs. Poyntz?" she asked, as he finished.

He nodded.

"And do you now?" she asked, shyly, for which she was punished by a kiss.

Then there were the Poyntzes to call upon, Bella to be written to, and all sorts of other things to be done.

Colonel Hunter and his daughter, who were on their way home, undertook to enlighten the Squire. The latter, on first hearing the news, refused to believe it, and then declared that he could never be reconciled. But being much talked to by his wife and sister, and much remonstrated with by the old Colonel, he consented to let bygones be bygones. Then, having retired to his own room, he spent half an hour chuckling at the end of which he had to start for quartermasters' mess, where he told everybody once (and some of them twice) what a grand match his daughter Sybil had made.

quite forgetting to add that he personally had done his best to prevent her marrying at all.

He was not nearly so ready to forgive the Bramstons, but a cousin of Jack's providentially dying at that time, and leaving him heir to the Dandridge title and estates, he suddenly became mollified and consented to receive them all.

Need one tell how the whole village of Hasborton turned out en masse to welcome the Squire's daughters? How Tom's feelings, getting so much the better of him, he had insisted upon pretty Mary's naming the day; and, lastly, how worthy Mrs. Prince, either from emotion or strong waters, was in such a state of excitement that she nearly missed seeing the couples pass altogether.

Nor need one tell of the triumphal entry into Danebury, and the disgust of the match-making mammas with the marriageable daughters.

Sir Roger and his wife never had another misunderstanding. There is no longer any fear of the Baronet's dying out. Jack became Lord Dandridge in course of time, and quite threw Sir Roger into the shade with the Squire, who, by-the-bye, has now managed to persuade himself that it was entirely through his desperate exertions that his daughters married so well.

Mabel Poyntz laid siege to young Penshurst with such success that she has become the wife of the future Squire.

They all live on the best of terms, so much so, that Roger has been distinctly heard to say that he does not in the least regret his duplicity, and, indeed, he has got more than he deserved by means of—STELLA'S MISTAKE.

[THE END.]

CINDERELLA.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Little did Lorenzo Villiani dream of what was in store for him as a hansom dashed up to his door, and a gentleman, slipping a sovereign into the butler's palm, and muttering the words, "Very old friend, want to give him an agreeable surprise," entered his sanctum unannounced.

Had a bomb exploded in the doorway he could not have given a greater start than when he lifted his crafty dark eyes and beheld his old enemy, Count Bodisco, who came straightway in, and, without a formal "how-do-you-do," seated himself in a chair, and as to his victim, leant back, joined the tips of his fingers together, and said, in an every-day voice,—

"And now, what have you to say for yourself, you scoundrel? The game is up; you are caught this time," fixing his pale eyes on him, intently as he spoke.

"Caught—game up! nonsense!" ejaculated the other, in a blustering tone. "What brings you here? I thought you were in gaol?"

"So I was, but I'm out," rejoined his visitor, quite coolly. "It's your turn now," significantly; "and, indeed, if it's only gaol-imprisonment for life, I must compliment you—you are getting off cheap."

"What—what are you arriving at?" snarled the other.

"Merely this; you have been a member of us, the Hand of Justice."

Lorenzo paled and winced visibly; it was from the long reaching arm of that iron hand he had been hiding for years.

"Here," producing as he spoke a pocket-book, and turning over the leaves with firm unfaltering fingers, "are many entries against Lorenzo Villiani—traitor, spy, and renegade. One of such entries alone is sufficient to convict you, and you know the punishment—death!"

Lorenzo shuddered, as well he might. "Here!" glancing over a book, "you betrayed Korotko. Here we have positive proof that you cheated Stellmacher out of every

florin, and subsequently denounced him to the authorities. Here—but the entries are too many to read, you know them; you know, also, that we see, and know, and discover everything—nothing escapes us, and your villainous, muddled brain must often have wondered why you escaped for so long. Know the reason—your sentence was but deferred. I myself reserved it for my own reward, the pleasure of ridding the world of such a monster. I was in prison, as you probably knew, and possibly hoped for life. You ventured to London, but you ventured too soon. Bah!" with a gesture of contempt, "it mattered not; we would have found you anywhere—were you to have plunged into the crater of Etna itself. You are but a miserable ostrich, with your head in the sand, and you know it. Our vengeance may be slow, but no one knows better than yourself that it is sure."

"And are you come to brave me like a lion in its den?" said Villiani, in a trembling voice, searching in a drawer before him with one hand, and keeping his eyes on his visitor all the while.

"Lion!" ejaculated Bodisco, "as in lion's skin," producing a revolver as he spoke. "Did you think to be first, eh?" with a sneering laugh. "Take your hand out of that drawer, madman, or I shall shoot you."

"Shoot me—you dare not," returned the abused and trembling villain, obediently withdrawing a reluctant hand; "we are in England—don't forget that. There is a policeman round the corner," he added, with the last flicker of his expiring courage.

"Oh! indeed," sarcastically; "a policeman round the corner is there. I'm delighted to hear it. We may want him—not for the little business between you and me, for that," with grim significance, "can come off at any time, but for this affair of Lady Osborn's. I know all about it," he added, nodding his head, and looking at his victim with a malignant smile.

"You know all about it—then I don't!" returned Villiani, with a miserable attempt at bravado.

"Come now, none of your lies with me; be careful," said Bodisco, fiercely, cocking his revolver as he spoke. "You made away with her, you drew her fortune—the Princess Dormanoff's rubles. Heaven and earth! if the old woman could only rise out of her grave, and see who has the spending of her money! But that's not the point—what have you done with her niece? Where is she?"

To this inquiry a long silence ensued, Lorenzo glaring across the table like a wild beast in his lair, and at bay.

"I give you just five minutes," looking over at the clock, "to prepare an answer—the answer. If at the end of that time you have not told the whole truth, you rascal, and nothing but the truth, I shall shoot you—not here, now, for that would make a fuss, and spoil the carpet, but within the next seven days. I swear it, and you know what our oaths are worth—full value. By rights we owe you twelve deaths, and if I could inflict them all on your miserable body, one after the other, I would," he concluded, between his set-teeth, as he gazed at the miserable spectacle of abject terror at the other side of the table.

And the clock went ticking on—one minute was gone—two minutes—three minutes—neatly four, and Lorenzo spoke at last in a husky whisper.

"What is to be the price?" he asked, hoarsely.

"The price—what do you mean?" demanded Bodisco.

"The price of the secret about her. I'll not give it for nothing; no, not for nothing. Give me my life."

"You may have your life," replied the Russian, contemptuously, giving it to him as if it were as valueless as the pining of an apple—"your life if we find her as she was lost, unimpaired in health and looks, then you may have your miserable, worthless life; but not in Europe, my friend, it is too limited for your

energies. To Australia or South America you go, and never come back. The instant you set foot on this continent the sword shall fall. There, those are our terms, and time is up, where is she?"

"She is mad," said Villiani, slowly—"insane."

"Then you have made her so, you villain," cried Bodisco, passionately; "tell the truth, or I shall wring it from your throat. Do you hear me, sir?" raising his voice for the first time.

And, accordingly, thus stimulated alike by hope and fear, Lorenzo began a halting tale of how Lady Curzon had come with charity to her sisters, of how he had met her in the avenue, of how she had insulted him, and he, in a moment of involuntary passion, had struck her.

"Ah!" was Bodisco's commentary, drawn lowly through his closed teeth; "after?"

"She fell, I thought she was dead, but after a while she came to. She could walk, but she was dazed, her reason was obscured—she, in short, was imbecile. I was ashamed, I was really sorry."

"You!" scoffingly; "you mean you were justly alarmed."

"I," proceeded Lorenzo, "took her by boat, and by night, to an old servant. She kept her for a time till—"

"Till, in short, the hue-and-cry was over; and then," demanded Bodisco, "having got a good slice of the lost lady's fortune, might I be permitted to inquire your next move, most noble and chivalrous of mankind?"

"I sent her to the Frogshire Lunatic Asylum—it was the best place for her."

"It was, at any rate, cheap," said the Russian. "And what is her name at present?"

"I believe it is Polly Carson," he faltered, avoiding the other's ferret eyes.

"Oh! you believe—ah! and she is still there?"

"Yes."

"And out of her mind?"

"Yes."

"And will it be so for life?"

"I am told there is no change."

"Oh! you ruffian," cried Bodisco, violently shaking the table backwards and forwards with both his hands; "what is to be done with you?—killing is too good for you! You should, if I had my way, be roasted alive at a slow fire, and taken away when you scorched, and put back again. You should have your head soldered up in a box with a live rat in it, who would eat you piecemeal—you should be torn in pieces by wild horses!"

"You promised me my life," said the other, sullenly; "and you don't break promises in the Hand—"

"No promise could be binding with such as you," cried Bodisco, rising; "you are not human! But you may live for the present; I'll promise no more than that. Prepare at once to disgorge your vile, ill-gotten gains—to-morrow I see your victim—to-morrow I place the matter in a lawyer's hands. We will have no scandal, but we will have justice, and you shall have the benefit of the Society of the Hand of Justice."

So saying Bodisco walked out of the room, and closed the door after him with a slam that shook the house, and, entering his hansom, was immediately speeding back to Pall Mall.

"A gentleman had called twice at his club to know if he had returned, and was now waiting," said the hall-porter, as he hurried in.

This gentleman, of course, was Mr. Loraine, whose impatience knew no bounds, and whose first word was a breathless "Well!"

"Well," returned Bodisco, irritably, resolved to keep this news to himself, and feeling a jealous distrust of this good-looking, anxious Englishman; "there's not much to tell; I shall know more presently," evasively.

"But did he say nothing?" demanded Loraine, quickly.

"He said a little."

"Tell me one thing," very eagerly, "is she alive?"

"Yes, she's alive," removing his gloves carefully as he spoke.

"And where?" with a little tremble in his voice.

"That I cannot positively say, but not more than thirty miles from Mount Rivers. I can't tell you any more at present."

Mr. Loraine had sufficient penetration to see that the Count knew more than he intended to reveal, and that further questions would be useless, and only irritate him unnecessarily. He must be content to know that she was alive, and he was resolved to try what effect he himself could personally bring to bear on the rascally *ci-devant* courier Count.

"I need not ask," he said, taking up his hat as he spoke; "of course he was at the bottom of the whole business."

"Of course he was—any child might have known that," rejoined the Count rudely.

He was put out by the news he had heard. Pauline was imbecile, but he was resolved to possess himself of some of her money. He alone knew what riches that old Sophie had left behind her. Some of it must come to him, but how? Besides this perplexing question he was hungry, and not in the humour to do the civil to this pertinacious inquirer; let him run the trail for himself. If Pauline was incurable she must stay where she was, as Pauline Carson. It would make no difference to her; but there would be one great change—the Russian fortune in future should filter through his delicate fingers and his pockets, and no longer through those of that rascal, Lorenzo Villiani.

He had frightened him well, and he might consider himself lucky to get out of the country with his life; as to those two horrible old hags, his accomplices, if they did not keep quiet and hold their tongues, it would be worse for them. He, Ivan de Bodisco, would unmask their evil deeds, and put them in the social pillory—that he swore.

The Count came to all these noble resolutions as he sat at a little table alone, eating a most excellent dinner, and drinking his favourite Burgundy. "On the whole, he had had a hard day's work," he said to himself, as he rolled his cigarette between his fingers, and squeezed a lemon into his black tea, "and, take it all in all, the cards might drop into his hand very easily, after all. Villiani was beaten, and as to that clever chap, Loraine, he is no relation, he has no right to be hunting for her, and, as far as I am concerned, he shall never find her. I know where to put my hand on Polly Carson, and I flatter myself I can trump whatever card he likes to play."

Mr. Loraine knew that the Count was certain to commence a search for the missing lady, and he was resolved to follow his example in his own person, and, so to speak, follow suit.

He meant to set out and have a preliminary interview with Villiani, and, with that end in view, drove to that gentleman's (?) abode the next afternoon, but was doomed to disappointment. The blinds were drawn down in all the front windows, and the servant who opened the door said, "Not at home," before the visitor had even time to ask the usual question.

This was a disappointment—a check; he ventured to call at the Count's club, *en route* for home; another check, "the Count had left town that morning; could not say when he would return; letters to be left."

But, meanwhile, the Count was sharing the same fortune in the town of Frogborough. He had hastened there, fondly believing that he had nothing to do but ring the big visitors' bell at the asylum gate, and ask to see Polly Carson, and believed he would once more be face to face with Pauline Curzon—the widow Curzon. If she had not met with this misfortune she might have been Countess Bodisco—he admired her very much; her style, her air, her eyes, her fortune.

With a sigh of regret, dedicated to her sweet memory as last seen, the ornament of a distin-

guished company, he raised his hand and pulled imperiously at the bell.

The porter promptly answered it, opened the gate—a heavy, serious-looking, grim gate, that fully looked "those who enter here leave hope behind." He walked across the gravelled entrance, up to the cold-looking, stone edifice, and sent in his card to the matron, and was shortly afterwards ushered to her parlour, passing through long passages and by stout, well-barred doors, and one or two vacant-looking girls in bed, with cropped hair.

"What a place for Pauline!" he thought, as he hurried along, and soon found himself bowing to the amiable Miss Hitchins.

"Polly Carson you desire to see, sir. How unfortunate! I'm truly sorry to tell you that this day week, in some extraordinary manner, she slipped out with the washing-cart, and has not been heard of since; in short, she has run away!"

This was a serious "not at home" and checkmate to the Count de Bodisco.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

POLLY CARSON had run away. This was very discomfiting intelligence for the too sanguine Count. He showed his keen disappointment, nay, consternation, in his face, as he slowly lowered himself into a chair in Miss Hitchins's apartment, and surveyed her blankly with his fishy eyes.

"And how did she manage it? What possessed her?" he demanded, irritably, after an appreciable pause.

"Who can tell what possesses a mad woman?" responded the matron, contemptuously. "She, and, indeed, one or two others had got it into their heads that she was perfectly sane, and she had some long rigmarole of a story about a blow on the head, and her being a baronet's wife, and all manner of nonsense. I expect she will be back before the week is out. She had on the Asylum clothes, and she couldn't have had any money. They generally come back, or are sent back before very long. You need not be uneasy about her, I assure you."

"And what is your opinion of the state of her mind, madam?" said the Count, impressively.

"Quiet—very quiet. No trouble, and latterly as sane and as capable as anyone, only for her extraordinary delusions about grand relations and Russian princesses of all people!"

"Then, in other respects, you consider that she was sensible?" he asked, with some solicitude.

"Perfectly so; but a person's mind, like a beleaguered city, is no stronger you know than the weakest place in it, and Polly has one very weak place, you see."

"My dear madam, I am happy to tell you that her delusions, as you call them, are founded on fact—that she is the widow of a baronet, the niece of a Russian princess—is a woman of large fortune, and has been the victim of murderous designs, and of a most atrocious conspiracy. And as on all other points her mind, you say is clear and sensible, I am thankful to find that her reason is restored."

Miss Hitchins, during this announcement, sat gazing at her dapper, clean-shaven little visitor with feelings that were of a very "mixed" nature. If what he said was true "Bint" would exult over her, and with good reason. Bint had believed Polly's story—had been always her strong partisan, and she more than suspected that "Bint" had wickedly winked at her escape. She was too much amazed and annoyed to find speech for some seconds, and the Count proceeded eagerly.

"The first thing to do is to find her. We must set the detectives at work. We must offer rewards. We must spare no expense. She has been gone a week, you say? Have you no clue?"

"Not one; but of course you know who are her friends? She is sure to go to them. Has she not sisters?"

"Sisters! snakes! Why it was they that, put her here!" burst out the Count—they that have been battenning on her fortune! There's no time to lose. If you will give me the address of the nearest magistrate, ma'am, I will go and consult with him at once." And he did.

Immediately he left the Asylum he hurried to the address furnished by Miss Hitchins, but the consultation was not fruitful of much result, and the local police were unable to find any traces of the fugitive; she had completely and cleverly "got away."

And, in reality, Polly was hidden securely in a decent little lodging in Frogborough all the time, waiting till the first great vigorous search was over to make her escape to her old friend Letty.

Miss Hitchins's surmises had been quite correct. Scandalous as it may sound Mrs. Bint had not only winked at, but actually assisted the young woman, her *protégée*, to escape. "It might cost her her situation," she said, very seriously, "or she might be prosecuted if it all came out." But, nevertheless, she was prepared to run the risk. The half-yearly inspection was over. Polly had no chance of release (officially) for another six months. Six months might work a change; that would keep her there for life. So she resolved that her own unlawful hands should open the cage door, and let the bird go free.

She provided Polly with money, with a thick shawl, a close black bonnet and veil, and a note to a friend of hers, who let lodgings on a frugal scale.

And the great day came when Polly, whilst the unsuspicious porter was looking another way, and the gate stood wide open, slipped out with the laundry cart, and hurried away at the top of her speed.

She was not missed till tea-time, and by that hour she was comfortably seated in a neat little back room looking out on a cabbage-garden and long clothes-lines, with a black teapot in front of her and a loaf of cottage bread; also—what she had not handled for a long time—a real knife and fork!

She could hardly realise her situation. It seemed so strange to have no big bell to answer, nor to have to join a periodical troop of other short-haired, short-sleeved females passing down the passages to their evening meal, clamorous as rooks.

She was very, very thankful that night, as she knelt down and said her prayers, to feel that she had once more regained her reason and her liberty; but she felt that the path that lay before her was still dark and difficult, and that she had by no means come to the end of her troubles yet.

Hers was such a strange position—alive, but supposed to be dead—and she had so few friends. For a young woman who had for a time revolved in the most brilliant circles, surprisingly few.

There were one or two in Paris; there was Letty, and she supposed she might add Mr. Lorraine, and that was all.

She possessed her soul in patience for ten long days. To move sooner would have been a task fraught with much danger. She still retained her character of Polly Carson, and did a good deal of sewing for the good woman of the house, read all the newspapers, all the books she could borrow, and never showed herself out-of-doors.

At last the day came when she felt she might start (she was going to Letty, of course). Her little store of money was running painfully low, and she must risk the journey before it was all spent.

She left Frogborough and its narrow, steep streets, its sluggish river, its bare, cold-looking, castellated Asylum behind early one morning, and travelled safely, third-class, to the "junction."

She looked a decent young woman, in a stuff gown, a thick shepherd's plaid shawl, and a plain black bonnet and veil, and mended green kid gloves much too large, and being baggy in the fingers—a pair, in fact, with

which kind Mrs. Bint had endowed her young friend.

There were a few people going to a large fair at the junction—two farmers, a rosy farmer's wife, and a policeman.

They were all acquaintances, and talked very sociably of the weather, the crops, a wedding, and last, but not least, of the lunatic who was at large.

As this topic was discussed Pauline shrank up very closely to the window and turned her face away.

"You may well shudder, miss," said the farmer's wife, affably. "It's no wonder! They say she was a desperate character, and as big and strong as a man—that she was put up for child-murder—and the very warders were afraid of her! I never go to bed now—I don't look under it—I never go out into the cow-house, I don't look behind the door—I'm always in dread she's hiding somewhere about, and I'll not be easy till she's caught. Have you any chance of her, Mr. Dawes?" to the constable.

"Oh, we're sure to catch her yet," he returned, with a complacent glance at the girl at the window. "They are easily nabbed—they never go far!"

Pauline's shivering apprehension may be imagined, as she sat at the window with vividly beating heart and averted face, as the *pros* and *cons* of her whereabouts and the probability of her speedy capture were warmly discussed by her fellow-travellers in easy, unembarrassed country dialect.

At last the great streets of the county town came into view, and long lines of coal wagons and puffing engines; and two minutes afterwards they were alongside the platform, and she, being nearest the door, had sprung out.

There was something of the fugitive about that simple action—something too hasty to please the policeman's professional eye.

Supposing it was her and he caught her! What a "coup" for Tommy Dawes! His heart glowed within him at the mere idea.

She had no luggage, no, not even a parcel; that of itself added fuel to his suspicions. No one came to meet her, and she hurried away among the crowd as if she wished to be lost to sight.

Mr. Dawes had some trouble [in finding her.

She made one of a thickly-packed throng in front of the ticket-office for third-class passengers.

She turned her head uneasily from side to side, as if she was afraid of seeing someone, and in turning thus she met the policeman's inquisitorial eye, and coloured scarlet—the proper colour for detected guilt.

It was Polly, he was morally certain. He had her in his mind's eye.

He had already accompanied her back to Frogborough in the very next train, had handed her triumphantly over to the authorities, and had only to await substantial official recognition for his meritorious deed. For virtue was not always its own reward in the force.

Whilst he was thus cogitating the black bonnet disappeared.

He stared, he could not believe his eyes. It was no longer there, and he could not force his way any nearer, as the crowd were a stiff-necked, determined "first come first served" set.

Polly had merely ducked her head and wormed her way through them, impelled by an agony of despair and frantic resolve to escape.

The word (what inspiration prompted her) "police" acted as an "open sesame," and one or two burly figures—perhaps touched by a fellow feeling—instantly made way for and sheltered her till she darted out on another platform, and nearly ran into the arms of Mr. Lorraine, who had been down having a search on his own behalf in the neighbourhood of Mount Rivers, and was returning to town in a rather damped condition, at it had been mere waste

of time and a wild-goose chase; and here—could he believe it?—was Pauline herself, after all.

At first he certainly did not know her in her coarse dress and altered appearance, but when she spoke it was enough.

He dropped his cigar in sheer amazement and looked at her with not unnatural inquiry.

"Pauline—Lady Curzon!" he exclaimed.

"What are you doing here?"

"Oh, Mr. Lorraine!" she panted, stammering with fright and excitement. "How lucky I am to meet you. I've just escaped from Frogborough Lunatic Asylum, where I have been for two years. There's a policeman after me. Oh! for mercy sake, save me! Tell him I'm—here he is!"

"Well, young woman," said the policeman, in an easy, affable manner; "you see I know who you are, and you must just come along home with me. Been telling a lot of made-up stories to this gentleman, I'll go bail. But it's no use, my dear; you're not fit to be travelling about just yet. You'd best go back, where you are well taken care of, and where your friends will come and fetch you out in style all in good time—in a coach-and-four!"

"She's," touching his forehead with his forefinger, and looking at Mr. Lorraine, significantly, "from Frogborough. Been hunting every hole-and-corner for her for the last week. Now, say good-bye nicely to the gentleman, and come away, Polly, there's a good girl," soothingly, making an attempt to take her hand.

"For whom do you take this lady?" said her companion, now speaking in a tone of cool authority.

"Why, for Polly Carson, to be sure, sir. Don't let her come over you with any nonsense; they are all as cunning as cunning can be."

"There is no fear of that; as it happens that this lady is no more Polly Carson than any young woman on the platform. She is an old friend of mine, and her name is Lady Curzon!"

"Lady Curzon!" exclaimed the policeman, with an incredulous laugh. "She looks like a lady now, don't she, sir? I'd no idea Lady Curzon would demean herself to travel third-class," with the ghost of a wink, as much as to say, "I score this time."

"Third-class or not, she is Lady Curzon," said Mr. Lorraine, beginning to be angry. "And your opinion as to who or what she looks like is a matter beneath consideration. Just mind your own business, and leave Lady Curzon alone."

"But I am minding my own business," cried Tommy Dawes, fearing that this imperious looking gentleman was about to wrest his prey from him. "Here!" suddenly raising his voice, "here, Mr. Stationmaster, if you please."

Mr. Stationmaster promptly joined the group in answer to this summons, and rubbed his hands, and looked from one to the other, interrogatively.

"You've heard as one of the lunatics is missing," said Dawes, excitedly, "missing a good week. I've reason to know as that's her," pointing to Pauline. "He, this gentleman, swears it's no such thing, and he has been and gone and taken her under his protection," he added, aggrievedly, "and I thought to take her back to them by the 11.45. What's to be done?"

"This policeman is too clever by half," said Mr. Lorraine, ironically. "I have known this lady for years. Here is my card and address," producing it, "I will be responsible for her, and I state, on my honour, that she is not, and never was Polly Carson—will that satisfy you?"

"Will you let her take off her bonnet?" cried the constable, "just her bonnet, and I'll be contented."

Pauline's cropped head would at once have told the tale. But to this audacious proposition Mr. Lorraine replied,—

"No, certainly not; you will have to be satisfied with my word, and if you give any more trouble," looking at him very sternly, "I shall report you for frivolous detention to the county inspector."

At this terrible threat, Mr. Dawes paled and fell back. Roxy visions of promotion vanished, and prudence whispered to him to accept the inevitable, and to take himself and his suspicious elsewhere, which he did, to Pauline's unbounded relief, and a few minutes later she and Mr. Lorraine were seated in a first-class carriage in the London mail, en route for the metropolis.

Pauline had, as we are aware, come into the possession of an intelligent soul once more, all her slumbering faculties had awakened again.

The pressure of the skull upon the cerebrum (from the blow) had been the cause of this paralysis of her mind, and, thanks to an operation performed by the surgeon of the Asylum, this pressure had been gradually removed.

He had had but little hopes that this would have restored her mental balance; for her aunt had said she had always been "a natural."

But he had attempted an "experiment," if nothing else, and the very long time in which no results were apparent made him persuaded that the cure had spoken the truth.

And now Pauline sat *vis-à-vis* to her protector. Just the very same Pauline as ever, as far as her brain was concerned; but a shabby, wan, frightened-looking creature, who told him her whole astonishing stories with sobs, long stoppages between the sentences, and a good many tears.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

At a trial recently the jury returned the following verdict:—"Guilty, with some little doubt as to whether he is the man."

An old farmer said of his clergyman, whose sermons lacked point:—"Ah, yes, he's a good man, but he will rake with the teeth upward."

The wife of a roofer, being asked if she was not afraid to have her husband exposed to such danger, trustfully replied, "Oh, he is insured."

"I hope you say your prayers every night," remarked the good pastor to Miss Shoddy. "Indeed I don't," was the reply; "poor souls long to buy me a prayer rug!"

"Look here, Jim, there is a hole knocked out of this bottle you gave me," Jim:—"Why, here's the hole in it now. If it was knocked out, how could it be there?"

An indiscreet man confided a secret to another, and begged him not to repeat it. "It's all right," was the reply; "I will be as close as you were."

DARWINIAN THEORY: There is a boy in the city who "sprang from a monkey." The monkey belonged to an organ-grinder and attempted to bite the boy.

CARLYLE SAYS: "Laughter means sympathy." This will bring comfort to the man who has inadvertently trodden on orange peel.

NO FOREIGN ACCENT.

"Speaking of the difficulty foreigners experience in giving the proper accent to English," said Captain Boslum, "reminds me of the fact that when I first came hither I could not speak English, yet you cannot detect in my conversation a foreign accent."

"To acquire such perfection must have taken much time," replied a lady.

"Oh, yes, it required years."

"Must have been young when you came to this place?"

"Yes, I was very young. In fact, I was born here."

TOMMY asked his mother if the teacher's ferrule was a piece of the board of education.

A musical journal has an elaborate article for amateur vocalists, "How to Begin to Sing." How to get them to leave off when once they begin is still an unsolved problem.

"What object do you see?" asked the doctor. The young man hesitated a few moments, and then replied:—"It appears like a jackass, doctor, but I rather think it is your shadow."

"You see," said a lawyer, in summing up a case, where one party had sued the other on a transaction in coal; "the coal should have gone to the buyer." "Not so," said the judge; "it should have gone to the cellar."

A strawman, observing one of his men wearing the total abstinence blue ribbon, suggested that it seemed somewhat inconsistent with his line of business. "Well, sir," he said, "you see it makes folks like to tempt me, and then I succumb."

At the marriage of a Yankee widower, one of the servants was asked if his master would take a bridal tour. "Dunno, sah; when old missus was alive he took a paddle to her, dunno if he takes a bridle to do new, one or not."

BAGGAGE-MASTER (to old lady, who has caused him a great deal of unnecessary trouble):—"Well, mum, I just wish you was an elephant, and then you'd always have your trunk right under your nose."

"No, sir," exclaimed Filkinson, "I would not tell a lie to save my life." "To save your life?" repeated Fogg, "neither would I; but lies do not always save life. Remember your friend, Ananias, and tremble."

INDIGNANT AND IGNORANT.—The manager and proprietor of a rural theatre espied a man fast asleep in the private box one evening. "Who is that?" he asked, indignantly. "Oh, that is Major Fitzgibbon, a very rich man," was the answer. "I don't care if he is as rich as Croesus (he probably meant Croesus), he can't sleep in my theatre," said the manager.

ONE Captain Yarn was a perfect marine philosopher, and no amount of ill-luck ever depressed his faith or good spirits. Coming into the harbour once with an empty ship, after a three years' cruise, he was boarded by a townsman, who inquired: "Wal, Cap'n, how many bar's? Had a good 'age?" "No," responded the skipper, "I haint got a bar'l of ile aboard; but," said he, rubbing his horny palms with satisfaction, while his hard features relaxed into a smile, "I've had a mighty good sail."

LINUS POND.

Squire Borge is wealthy, and wishes his friends to understand that he is a wonderful sportsman. Last winter he started on a fishing trip, where he met with poor success. The first thing he did on returning to the city was to go to a market and buy fifteen trout. They were beauties, and he told the salesman what he was going to do, and asked him where he should say they were caught.

"Oh, tell them they were taken from Linus Pond."

On his way home the squire called and had the largest one photographed. Underneath the picture he wrote:—

"One of the fifteenth taken from Linus Pond, January 8th, 1884."

In two days he came back to the market-man and said:—

"Look here, where is Linus Pond? They asked me where it was, and I told them it was up in Northumberland. Then they got a map and wanted me to show it to them, and for the life of me I couldn't find it. Just tell me where it is, and I'll go home and fix them. Confound their hearts, I'll tell them where Linus Pond is, and give them enough of it."

Then the marketman gently led him outside the shop and pointed to his sign. It read: "Linus Pond. Fish, oysters, and game."

A CLERGYMAN removing from one city to another marked a large box containing his sermons, "Keep dry." They did.

SOMEONE who believes that "bravity is the soul of wit," writes:—"Don't eat stale Q. cumbers. They will W.P.P."

"I AM to tell the truth," "Yes," interrupted an acquaintance, "but you are a very bad shot."

"TELL your mistress that I have torn the curtain," said a boarder to a female domestic. "Very well, sir; mistresses will put it down as extra rent."

"Do you want fast colours?" asked the draper. "No, indeed," she answered, with a pretty blush. "My husband doesn't like anything fast."

A WELSH woman who got married the next day after her husband's death, excused herself on the ground that there was a whole ham in the cellar, and she was afraid it would spoil if she did not get someone to help eat it.

"TAKE a wing?" gushed a young and pompous upstart, extending his arm to a sensible young lady, at the close of a prayer meeting. "Not of a gander," she quietly replied, and walked with her mother.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL teacher was giving a lesson on Ruth. She wanted to bring out the kindness of Boaz in commanding the reapers to drop large handfuls of wheat. "Now, children," she said, "Boaz did another very nice thing for Ruth; can you tell me what it was?" "Married her!" said one of the boys.

THE MIND-CURE DOCTRINE:—"A person is never sick. If you think you are sick, you will feel sick; but you are not." Patient:—"And if you think I pay you, you get the money; but then you don't? Oh, yes, I understand. It is very simple, delightfully simple."

"DOCTOR," said Mr. Grosby, "look at my awful face! Jones hits me in the eye with a club or Saturday night; what shall I take for it?" As the medicine man drove swiftly away, back came the sympathetic answer:—"Take offence, man; take offence!"

If we must talk about the weather, why not vary the formula, "It is a pleasant day." Everyone is tired of admitting that it is. Why not be scientifically accurate when one meets a friend? The following is submitted as a specimen dialogue. Jones:—"Ah, Mr. Smith, I see we have cloudy weather with rains." Smith (with a cheerful smile):—"Yes, and variable winds shifting to colder north-easterly, stationary or higher pressure." Jones:—"Quite so; but it is gratifying to know that the rivers will remain nearly stationary and that the temperature has fallen thirty degrees in the Rip-Grande Valley. Good morning, sir."

MAKING IT A COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION.—A school-teacher having occasion, a few weeks since, to punish one of his pupils for some misdemeanour, placed him on the platform to wait until he had heard some classical recitation; but the culprit took advantage of the teacher's engagement and escaped from the school-house. The teacher, being somewhat vexed, promised another scholar a reward of one shilling if he would bring the runaway back to the school-house. Before this could be accomplished, however, the boy who had escaped heard of the offered reward, and sent word to the teacher that he would "return and take the licking for airpence—cash down."

THE WIDOW'S RECKONING.

A person recently met a Liverpool lady who is distinguished as having been four times a widow, and has now again entered the bonds of matrimony. Said the friend:

"I think I once had the pleasure of dining with you in Paris?"

"When?" asked the fair stranger.

"In 1865," he replied.

"Ah!" she said, reflectively, "that may have been so, but I had forgotten it. You see," she added, "it was two or three husbands ago."

SOCIETY.

HIS MAJESTY and the Duchess of Albany stood sponsors a short time ago to the infant daughter of Mr. Arnold Boyle, C.B., medical attendant to the late Duke of Albany. The infant, who received the names of Victoria Helen Cicely, was christened at Esher Church by the Rev. S. Warren.

THE PRINCESS LOUISE, who opened the Brighton School of Science and Art in 1877, has given her patronage to, and selected three of her own water-colour drawings for exhibition at an Art Loan Exhibition, which it is proposed to hold in Brighton during the autumn, with the ultimate view of reducing the debt on the school.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH, on the nomination of the Prince of Wales, has been elected a life governor of the Royal Agricultural Society, to the funds of which his Royal Highness has sent a donation of £50.

WHEN MAJOR-GENERAL the Duke of Connaught relinquishes the command of the Meerut Division he is to be succeeded by Major General Sir A. Macpherson, now commanding at Aldershot. It is probable that his Royal Highness will return to England in April next.

PRINCE GEORGE OF WALES, who returned to Marlborough House with the Prince of Wales from the North, proceeded recently to Greenwich to pursue his studies at the Royal Naval College. The Prince accompanied his son thither.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL F. G. BURNABY will, at the end of the present month, while in command of the Royal Horse Guards, celebrate his 25th year of service in the army, the whole of which has been passed in the distinguished regiment which he now commands.

Two of the daughters of the Dean of Westminster are writing a handbook to the Abbey, which will be published during the winter.

THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT has been gazetted Hon. Colonel of the 8th and 4th Battalions West Kent Regiment of Militia.

It has been decided that the memorial of the late Bishop of Ripon shall take the form of a new east window in Ripon Cathedral, which is to be dedicated to the two first Bishops.

MR. ROBERT BROWNING is in the Engadine, where he is putting the finishing touches to his new volume of poems, which will be published in the autumn and called "Fertile Fancies," instead of "Serious," which was the first title thought of.

THE EMPRESS EUGENIE, who is apparently in very delicate health, has gone from Carlsbad to Arenberg.

THE TWO ELDEST DAUGHTERS of the Prince and Princess Christian have been on a visit of some duration to the Dowager Duchess of Roxburghe, at Broomhall Park, East Lothian.

THE ANNUAL GRAND REVIEW at Donrobin Castle came off this year with much *clat*. Over 800 Highlanders, under the command of their Colonel, the Marquis of Stafford, marched past the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland and a distinguished company. The weather on the whole was fine, but some rain fell, which did not quench the ardour either of the Volunteers or the spectators. After the Duchess had distributed the shooting-prizes, the Duke, in the course of a neat speech, asked the Highlanders to do him a favour by honouring the young lady who sat by his wife's side, and who was shortly to become a member of the family. With great enthusiasm loud and prolonged cheers followed for the Lady Millicent St. Clair Erskine, the Marquis of Stafford's fiancée, who bowed her acknowledgments.

STATISTICS.

LIVERY OF THE CITY OF LONDON.—The new lists of the liverymen of the 75 companies who are entitled to vote in Parliamentary elections for the City and for the election of Lord Mayor, sheriffs, and other civic officers have just been prepared. It appears that the total number of voters is 7,754, or an increase of 159 as compared with last year. By far the largest increase—62—was in connection with the Haberdashers' Company, and the largest decrease—11—was in the Merchant Taylors' Company. In eight companies there was no increase of voting strength.

FAILURES IN FRANCE.—The French commercial tribunals, according to the report issued for 1883, had a tolerable busy time of it in pronouncing upon the failures of the year preceding, which numbered 7,061, as, in addition to these, 7,533 remained to be adjudged from 1881, making a total of cases for the sessional year 1882-83 of 14,594. The failures that took place between 1878 and 1882 have shown a decided tendency to increase, being 6,021 in 1878 and mounting gradually up to 7,061 in 1882, or an augmentation of 17 per cent. The increase of failures in the business circles of Paris has been less marked than in other places. At Lyons they increased by a third, being 279 instead of 209, but almost of the other manufacturing towns and cities there was a diminution, except at Nice, where business has been languishing, and the failures rose from 31 to 65.

GEMS.

THE WISE MEN of old have sent most of their morality down the stream of time in the light skiff of apothegm or epigram.

No woman can be handsome by the force of features alone, any more than she can be witty only by the help of speech.

As a man is known by his company, so a man's company may be known by his manner of expressing himself.

We think our civilization is near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star.

A promise should be given with caution and kept with care. It should be made with the heart and remembered by the head.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

POTATOES.—Potatoes which are to be served with roast beef are very nice cooked in this way:—Boil them, and when they are done and peeled, warm them up in melted butter, sprinkle with chopped parsley, and serve in a hot dish.

APPLE PIE.—If the housekeeper will add two or three tablespoonfuls of boiled sour cider to each sliced apple pie in making, she will find it a decided improvement at this season. Sweeten and season as usual. For dried apples, mix a small quantity with the stewed sauce before filling the plates, or slice a lemon among the apples while stewing. Or, should the apples be sour enough, a few raisins make an agreeable addition.

A PICKLE OF PEACHES OR OTHER FRUIT.—To seven pounds of peaches: three pounds of the best brown sugar, one ounce of stick cinnamon, one ounce of cloves, and about three pints of cider-vinegar. Put the vinegar and sugar on to boil. Skim it, and throw in the cinnamon and cloves. Then put in the peaches, and let them boil for a little while, but not to be thoroughly done. Put it into a jar, and cover very tight. The next day, pour off the vinegar and let it come to a boil, then pour it again over the peaches. Repeat this process again the following day. Damsons are very nice if pickled in this way.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A JAPANESE BOUDOIR.—A Japanese boudoir is a capital specimen of what may be done in the way of relatively simple decoration. The walls are hung with a sort of canvas, striped dull red and yellow, and against this, between the trophies of arms, the hanging *clayvases* with their delicate knickknacks, the tall lacquer cabinets, are secured several large figures of Japanese women in padded *oropes*, birds on the wing, strange, grotesque animals, and weird masks. Along the top of the room is stretched a frieze of yellow silk, embroidered with more figures, long enough for one side only; but then, dissimilarity is the presiding spirit of Japanese art. Over the door are draped pretty Oriental scarfs, that may have graced the shoulders of a Bayader, while the harsh brilliancy of the pier glass, which a French architect must needs build in over the fireplace of every Paris *salon*, is almost wholly concealed beneath a fine Indian shawl, pendant from the top and drawn in a festoon on one side, above a fine jar of cloisonné enamel filled with the plumed blossoms of the yellow mimosa.

A NEAT TABLE.—A clean, tastefully-laid table whets the appetite. How much better water tastes from a clean, polished glass!—the tin tea and coffee-pot bright—the edges of the dishes free from dabs of food they contain, and all required articles on the table, spoons, salt-cellars and caster full of salt, vinegar and pepper, so it is not necessary for somebody to jump up from the table every few minutes to supply some need. This is not only annoying to a company, but particularly bad manners, beside exhibiting one's lack of forethought, planning and execution. It gives the visitor an impression that they are causing a great difference in affairs; in short, it puts them under a feeling of obligation, and, I know from experience, seems as if we've disturbed the whole household element, and in some way are responsible for it. Otherwise, when the table is set there seems nothing to do but to eat, chat and laugh. Order is Heaven's first law, and it reaches the highest and lowest point of civilization; yes, living, for without enjoyment and improvement are deductions.

HOLIDAYS.—Change is beneficial to anyone; so I say to all tired housekeepers, make it a part of your religion, and a very essential part of it, too, to "get off" for a week, at least, in the hot weather, if it be possible, and see to it that it is possible. There are two ways in which farmers and their families can have holidays and a Holiday spent with a big H, without spending money for fine clothes, or for railway fares, or for hotel bills. All that is required are good management and determination. The holidays should be frequent—once a week at least—and may consist in drives about the surrounding country. You may feel too tired to go, but go all the same, and you will find that you will be much the better for it. Your minds will be quickened, you will receive new ideas, see how other people manage out of-door affairs, and affairs indoors, may be. It will break up the drive and strain of everyday life, of which there is such imperative need. For a man or a woman, tired out nervously and physically, next to a sea voyage there is nothing so good as a drive in the open air; and it is stated, and undoubtedly with good reason, that people who drive a great deal live longest. The most of the horse is saved in doctors' bills. The holiday of a week means a family camping-out. Every family can manage it, and manage to subside merrily, like gipsies, for a week. The only point to be insisted on is to do it, and not to be overcome by obstacles. Nobody will run away with the horse or the barn, although you may think such a calamity probable. More women are kept by the house than keep it, and are in bondage of the house all their lives long.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

P. V.—Write to some historical society about it.

D. M.—Few copyists write a better hand.

BRUNETTE.—Pennsylvanian is very good.

A. CONSTANT READER.—July 14, 1887, fell on Tuesday.

A. C. L.—We do not advertise addresses.

O. N. I.—Many who have tried them pronounce them valueless.

C. B.—1. No. 2. For freckles, try glycerine and borax water. 3. A blonde.

E. C.—1. Madeleine or Magdalene signifies magnificent; Ida, godlike. Your handwriting is fair. 3. No.

D. F. G.—We presume they all keep it, but we cannot recommend any particular one.

R. H. M.—We cannot vouch for the reliability of either concern.

E. C. D.—The translation of the Latin sentence, *Non omnis morietur*, "I shall not altogether or wholly die."

R. M. G.—Elaine was a mythic lady connected with the romances of King Arthur's court. Her story is told by Tennyson in the "Idylls of the King."

B. M.—We can only advise you to be as patient as you can under the circumstances you relate with so much pathos. Brighter days will come to you.

THRO. VANE.—1. Your poetical efforts are too crude for publication. 2. Your handwriting is fair. All questions are answered gratuitously in this column.

CARRIE B.—1. No. 2. Borax water acidulated with a little fresh lemon juice will soften and whiten the hands. Prepared chalk is a safer dentifrice than the one mentioned. 3. Fair.

E. D. B.—We cannot recommend anything to remove superfluous hair, for if removed it will grow again, and be thicker and coarser than before. All depilatories are apt to injure the skin.

R. M. G.—In selecting flour we are advised to look to the colour; if it is white with a yellowish straw-colour tint we should buy it; but if it is white with a bluish cast, or with black specks, we should refuse it.

C. R. V.—The elasticity of cane-chair bottoms may be restored by washing the cane with soap and water until it is well soaked, and then drying thoroughly in the air, after which they will become as tight and firm as new, if none of the canes are broken.

D. C. L.—A better plan for removing grease-spots than by applying a hot iron is to rub in some spirits of wine with the hand until the grease is brought to powder, and there will be no trace of it. Every schoolboy is not aware that inkspots can be removed from the leaves of books by using a solution of oxalic acid in water.

M. G. P.—Crape may be renovated by thoroughly brushing all dust from the material, sprinkling with alcohol, and rolling in newspaper, commencing with the paper and crape together, so that the paper may be between every portion of the material. Allow it to remain so until dry.

ANNIE.—Eggs could be purchased with greater confidence if the German method of preserving them by means of silicate of soda was generally followed. A small quantity of the clear syrup solution is smeared over the surface of the shell. On drying, a thin, hard, glassy film remains, which serves as an admirable protection and substitute for wax, oil, gum, and such like.

A. C. C.—Amateur joiners may derive comfort from the knowledge that nails and screws if rubbed with a little soap are easily driven into hard wood. The same household commodity, of a fine white quality, if rubbed over new linen, will enable it to be more easily embroidered, as it prevents the threads from cracking.

C. M. R.—1. To get rid of warts, dissolve a tablespoonful of common washing soda in a pint of water, and wash the warts with the solution for a minute or two, letting the soda dry upon them. Keep the solution in a bottle, and repeat the washing until the excrescences entirely disappear. 2. Bathe your nose in a tolerably strong solution of borax and water. 3. You write a fair business hand.

A. A. A.—A deal of breakage among glass and crockery can be prevented by the simple precaution of placing lamp-chimneys, tumblers, and such articles in a pot filled with cold water to which some common table salt has been added. Boil the water well, and then allow it to cool slowly. When the articles are taken out and washed they will resist any sudden change of temperature.

M. G. B.—1. An excellent furniture gloss is made as follows:—To one pint of spirits of wine add one-fourth of an ounce of gum copal, one fourth of an ounce of gum arabic, and one ounce of shellac. The gums should be well bruised, and sifted through a piece of muslin. Put the spirits and gums together in a vessel that can be closely corked, and place them near a warm stove, frequently shaking them. In two or three days all will be dissolved. Strain through muslin and keep well corked for use. 2. A common lac varnish may be made by digesting four ounces of clear-grained lac in one pint of spirits of wine in a wide-mouthed bottle, keeping it in a warm place for two or three days, and occasionally shaking it. When dissolved strain through flannel into another bottle for use.

A. W. H.—Your complaint is well founded.

C. B. B.—A piece of charcoal retained in the mouth for an hour during the day will sometimes correct an offensive breath, but it depends what it arises from.

C. C. P.—If you wish to keep lemons fresh for some time, you have only to place them in a jar of water and change it every morning.

W. A.—Bar soap should be cut into square pieces, and put in a dry place, as it lasts better after shrinking.

F. L. D. G.—Swift wrote the lines you quote:
"Convey a libel in a frown,
And wink a reputation down."

C. C. R.—You may get rid of the trouble complained of by gargling the throat night and morning with a tolerably strong solution of salt and water.

N. V. C.—Consult a physician on the subject. Under proper treatment the habit to which you refer can be broken up.

C. G.—If you have a taste for the work of engraving, you will find it as good a trade as any other. Begin it at once.

P. M. R.—The words you quote will be found in the first chapter of "Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia," by Samuel Johnson.

H. M. J.—1. Write direct to the public her. He will supply you with the article named. 2. You write a fair hand.

MARY ANN.

Though the hair is very red
On her head,
And her freckles are a ban
To her beauty, not a man
Or woman, but admires
Mary Ann.

There came upon her care
Unaware;
A drunkard's child was she,
In a home of misery.
"Now a helper," said the child,
"I must be."

Then she put her foot down hard
In the yard,
And she said, in accents clear,
"I will never go for beer;
Or drink a drop myself,
Father dear!"

Yet so gentle and so mild
Was the child,
That she won that father's heart,
Till in life he took a start,
And resolved to act a far
Better part.

Now look across the way,
Any day,
And you'll see a sober man
Talking o'er some household plan
With the earnest little lass,
Mary Ann.

M. K.

M. A. R. L.—1 and 2. We know of no cosmetic for the purposes named that we can recommend. 3. Bathe them in tepid water. 4. Sage tea is said to promote the growth of the hair. 6. Weak eyes may be strengthened by bathing them in a weak solution of salt and water.

C. F. M.—A quarter is the fourth of a hundredweight, being 25 or 25 pounds, according as the hundredweight is reckoned at 112 or 100 pounds; also the fourth of a ton in weight, or eight bushels of grain; as, a quarter of wheat; also the fourth part of a chaldron of coal.

W. L. M.—To treat burns and discolourations caused by gunpowder, smear the scorched surface with glycerine, by means of a feather; then apply cotton wadding; lastly cover with oil silk. In cases where the gunpowder has got into the skin, a little glycerine applied daily will soften it and enable you to dislodge the specks with a needle.

A. C.—Psoriasis (pronounced soriasis) is from the Greek word *psora*, to rub. By some medical authorities it is defined as a chronic form of eczema. It is liable to be confounded with lepra, or lepra alphas (white leprosy), which is regarded as incurable, while psoriasis, or salt rheum, may be cured in time.

H. C. S.—1. To avoid smoring, lie on the right side and never on the back. 2. To stain wood like ebony, take a solution of sulphate of iron (green copperas) and wash the wood over with it two or three times; let it dry, and apply two or three coats of a strong decoction of logwood; wipe the wood, when dry, with a sponge and water, and polish with linseed oil. 3. Your handwriting is very fair.

P. W. A.—Flies are a familiar nuisance; but we are told of a foreign remedy in laurel oil, which will not only rid us of these pests, but preserves looking-glasses and picture-frames when coated with it. Jane, the "help," should derive satisfaction from the assurance that beetles may be effectually got rid of by sprinkling once or twice on the floor a mixture of pure carbolic acid and water, one part to ten.

W. G.—The employment of velvet is not affected by the rise in the temperature, as it is not considered a strictly winter fabric, and even light goods, such as muslin and lace, are trimmed with it.

J. C.—The chemisettes of coloured linen with standing collars are worn with the tailor-finished dresses. A very standing collar is style the Duke. 3. Jersey cuffs, two inches wide, are convenient for the slight sleeves now so fashionable, and they come with round or square corners, plain or hem-stitched.

W. S.—Your parents should endeavour to provide you with proper company of your own age. We think that you have some reason to complain. Take your mother fully into your confidence, and get her sympathy and assistance. Act in all things with the approval of your parents. A girl cannot be too prudent and obedient.

K. V.—This young man should offer his hand and speak to your parents. He has no right to profess love without asking you to marry him. Let him understand this plainly, and when he offers to kiss you, tell him that you do not think it right until you are engaged with the knowledge and consent of your parents. By this course you will ascertain his sincerity. The hair enclosed is brown.

L. C.—The casquin bodice is made in the same way as the Parisian blouse—that is, shirred at the waist front and fastened around the waist with a silk cord. It is usually made of dark green, garnet, or blue India cashmere, and the tunic is of the same material, draped over a skirt of shot silk. The collar, revers, cuffs, and a soft cravat are made of shot silk to match, and the whole costume is very becoming to young ladies of slender figure.

M. C. M.—White dresses this season are lovely beyond compare, and are seen in every style, from the plain white linen lawn, with full-tucked skirt and Mother Hubbard waist, to the most costly and de luxe creations of lace and satin. Between the two contrasting models is a wide range of fabrics and garnitures, one of the leading materials being the old favourite of last year, nuns' veiling, in cream or ivory tints. A dress of this fabric is now almost as general and as much worn on every occasion as the regulation black silk toilet always has been.

L. M.—Marital agencies are very dangerous affairs for a lady to have any dealings with. We advise you not to think too much about contracting a second marriage, but to apply yourself to the performance of the duties that lie nearest to you, and let time and circumstances determine your future in respect to marriage. Endeavour to help your sister. You may meet a proper gentleman at any time.

A. V. W.—If you mean by frost-bites the effects of actual freezing of the hands, the treatment is the same as for a burn. Use olive oil and cooling lotions to relieve the pain, and keep the hand well wrapped in cotton wool until it heals. Perhaps, however, you only have the red and itching swellings of the fingers known as chilblains. If so, use strong vinegar to allay the itching; bathe the fingers in a lotion of equal parts of spirits of camphor and solution of acetate of lead (remember acetate of lead is poison; if taken internally, wear warm gloves, and, above all, keep your hands away from the fire when you come into the house feeling cold).

K. F.—For children's dresses Madeira embroidery and guipure, both white and ecru, are much more fashionable than fine filmy laces. They are more economical on washing dresses, for they stand the wear and tear of repeated washings, and also the violence of childish play. 2. Entire sets of willow-ware are fashionable for summer bedrooms. The bureau and washstand have marble tops, and all the furnishings are of a substantial order. 3. A charming fashion for summer costumes, and which is very popular, is that of the corsege slightly open at the neck, with a scarf tulle, gauze, or crape, crossed on the chest and passing a wide waistband, the two ends of the scarf forming a little drape over the hips and tied in a bow or knot at the back. 4. We will send you the "Language of Flowers" on receipt of 10d., from which you can gain the information you desire. 5. Foundation skirts are still made rather narrow, but the dress skirts worn over them are of more than reasonable width, and it is probable that before long the foundation skirt will either follow the example of the real dress skirt, and be increased in width, or be dispensed with altogether. 6. Long pelisses, with yokes of velvet or embroidery, are worn by misses.

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